

Can you spot the musical instrument in the picture?



Just in case you didn't get it, it's the set of steps adjoining the first structure on the right of the picture. These steps give off musical swaras (sounds) when tapped. What purpose it served no one knows for sure, but that it's an engineering work of art isn't in doubt. For more works of genius, visit the temple.

It's in Dharasuram, Thanjavur District, Tamilnadu.

Seen these ancient si wonders si yet?







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5. Track down all the 'A's in the Nutrine advertisement

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Beginning from May, your favourite magazine Chandamama in English and all its language editions will carry Nutrine - Chandamama contests for 6 months. All you have to do is to choose the right answers, fill in the entry form and mail this page, along with 5 wrappers of 'Nutrine Chocolate Eclairs', before the closing date, to Nutrine Chandamama Contest, Chandamama India Limited, 82 Defence Officers's Colony, Ekkatuthangal, Chennai - 600 097.

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NUTRINE CHANDAMAMA OLYMPIC QUIZ CONTEST - 4

	Study the questions carefully and tick $[\checkmark]$ the correct answer in the blanks provided for each question.					
	1. Who was the first Indian woman to participate in the Olympics?					
	P.T.Usha Anju George Mary Leela Rao					
	2. Who became the first American to win four gold medals at the Berlin Olympics in 1936?					
	Tom Dolan Michael Johnson Jesse Owens					
	3. What is the maximum height recorded in the Men's High Jump event in the Olympics so far?					
	☐ 2.3 m ☐ 2.39 m ☐ 2.9 m					
	4. Name the US gold medallist in Women's 100 m in Seoul Olympics, 1988?					
	☐ Florence Griffith Joyner ☐ Jackie Joyner Kersee ☐ Paula Ivan					
The first woman gold medallist in an Olympic -						

The first woman gold medallist in an Olympic Games was Charlotte Cooper of Great Britain. She won the Tennis title in the Paris Olympics of 1900.

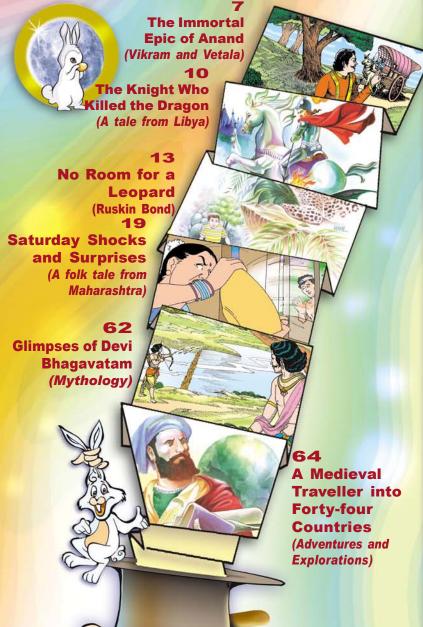
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A FEATHER IN THE CAP



We are happy to inform
our readers that *Chandamama*will soon come out in Santali,
which is a tribal language. As they
are aware, the magazine is already being published in 12
languages.

Preparations are apace in bringing out *Chandomamo* in Santali in Olchiki script which was developed by Guru Gomke Pandit Raghunath Murmu, whose birth centenary was observed in May this year. When the first issue sees the light of day soon, *Chandamamo* will be the only children's magazine for the over one crore Santali population, spread over the five States of Orissa, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar and Assam.

Chandamama was launched 57 years ago in Telugu and Tamil. Soon, there were demands that the magazine be brought out in more languages. The founders, Shri B.Nagi Reddi and Shri Chakrapani, were visionaries. They wanted to take India's heritage closer to children and they saw in the magazine a chain to link the people of India. If the publishers have today come forward to publish *Chandamama* in one more language, they are also paying their tribute to the founders.

Incidentally, an English-Gujarati bilingual edition is also under preparation for the benefit of the Gujarati community among the Indian population in North America. Three bilinguals have already been serving them for the past one year, apart from the English-Tamil bilingual reaching the Tamil community in Singapore.

All these editions have one purpose: to meet the demands of those who wish to have reading material in the languages they speak— their mother tongue.

Visit us at: http://www.chandamama.org

The art of progress is to preserve order amid change and to preserve change amid order.

The only completely consistent people are the dead.

-A.N.Whitehead

-Aldous Huxley

Man does not live by words alone, despite the fact that sometimes he has to eat them. Power corrupts, but lack of power corrupts absolutely.

- Adlai Stevenson



The First Games and After

declare the opening of the first international Olympic Games in Athens!"

This came from King George I of Greece. The date: April 5, 1896. This was followed by an anthem. The spectators were moved. This later became the official Olympic Anthem.



The Games began in a business-like fashion. The winner in the first event was James Connolly of the USA. He cleared 13.71 metres in the triple jump. Connolly's reward was a silver medal and a crown of olive branches.

The hero of the First Games was the Greek, Spiridon Louis, who won the marathon. The stadium erupted in cheers from the audience, and two Greek princes, George and Nicholas, got down from their royal enclosure and ran along with Louis up to the finishing line. Spiridon Louis was promised a free haircut and shave for life and free meals! But what Louis really wanted was a horse cart—to take water from his village in pots and sell it in Athens!

King George was now aware how much Greece had benefited from international publicity. So, he demanded: the Modern Games, too, should have a permanent venue: Athens! Baron de Coubertin wanted the Games to be truly international and go places. He suddenly declared that the Second Games would be held in Paris, as scheduled in 1900. With that the curtain came down on the First of the Modern Games.

The Olympic Games was seen not only as a sports extravaganza, but an inspiration to the participants to come out with their best performance. They, in turn, became role models for younger athletes. Read this story:

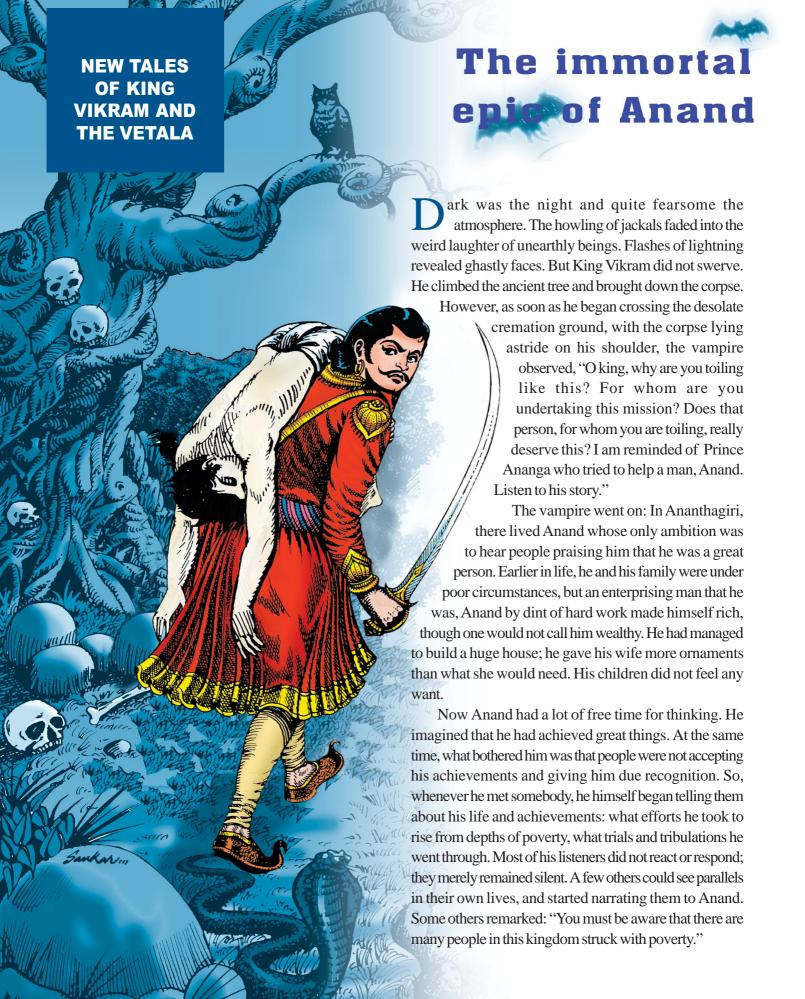
Charles Paddock was in school. He asked his coach: "What should I do to become the world's fastest sprinter?" The coach advised: "Raise your knees high and drive your legs like pistons." At the Antwerp Games (1920), Paddock clocked 10.8 seconds to win the 100 m gold and become the fastest man on earth.

How Athens will host athletes

The newly-built Olympic Village, 23 km from the Games venue, was thrown open to the athletes on July 23. Some 16,000 athletes from more than a hundred countries will stay in the 2,300 air-conditioned apartments enjoying every possible comfort. The Village will have separate facilities for worship and prayers for Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Jews, Buddhists, and followers of other faiths A great attraction will be the Olympic Museum which captures the entire Olympic history—both ancient and modern—in pictures and words.

Paddock was addressing a school gathering. He said, "Maybe there is an Olympic champion in this very audience!" There was a hush. A boy went up to him. "I would give anything if I could be a champion like you." Paddock gave him some tips. The boy was the hero of the Berlin Games (1936)—Jesse Owens.

History repeats itself, so they say. Owens stopped his car to give autographs. One boy raised his face and said, "Mr Owens, I would give anything to become an Olympic champion like you." Jesse Owens repeated what he had learnt from Paddock. The boy ran to his grandmother. "Grandma, I shall become an Olympic champion." In London, 12 years later, he equalled Jesse Owens's record of 10.3 seconds in 100m. He was Harrison Dillard.





Once a scholar by name Parameshwar came to the village to give a discourse on the *Ramayana*. He became popular and many villagers invited him to their houses and entertained him. Anand, too, invited him once to his house and while talking to him, he remarked, "In your discourse on the *Ramayana*, I have a doubt. Lord Rama's difficulties are all associated with his private life. He faced a lot of problems and made many sacrifices for the sake of his family. Such problems are faced by many people on this earth. If that be the case, why did the *Ramayana* become famous, and not the life stories of other people? Why do people worship Rama alone as God?"

To which Parameshwar replied: "You go to every house here, and you will find whatever is given in the *Ramayana* being enacted there. People are adamant and will not go for a give-and-take policy; women folk are given to jealousy and selfishness. All this leads to manifestations like demons and devils in every family. It will be interesting to listen to their experiences. Rama was an incarnation and he came down to earth to protect people and punish demons. He was instrumental in making common people do great things. If the experiences of

those whom you refer could be put to verses, like the *Ramayana*, people may compare them with Lord Rama. I am not aware of any composition on such people."

"O respected master, may I tell you my life story and will you write about me? Then people who will read that will praise both you and me," said Anand. Parameshwar asked him to narrate his life story. He realised that Anand was innocent but naive. But he did not want to disappoint him. He suggested that Anand should himself compose verses on his life since he had the talent.

Parameshwar pointed out, "Rama did not compose verses on himself. So, if you compose verses on your life and achievements, you'll certainly be greater than Rama!"

Inspired by this advice, Anand wrote several verses about his life and showed them to his wife. But she was not at all impressed. She said the *Ramayana* verses were very sweet to listen to. This made Anand think that the verses composed by him should be sung by his grandsons, like Lava and Kusha who sang the glories of Rama. But his grandsons did not like to sing the verses composed by him.

Now Anand became obsessed with his writings. He desperately wanted others to listen to his verses but whenever he approached anybody in the village, he ran away from him. Anand now started looking for ardent listeners outside his village and set out for the adjoining village. On the way, he saw a man lying on the road unconscious. He took pity on the young man and immediately took him to a village doctor.

Anand nursed him for four days. When he regained consciousness, the young man expressed his gratitude. "If you hadn't rescued me, I would have been dead by now. I don't how I'll repay my indebtedness."

Anand waited for some time and said, "I've written an epic. You'll be doing me a great service if you will only listen to my reading."

The young man enjoyed the narration, interjecting his appreciation in words like 'wonderful' and 'excellent'. "I've realised one of my ambitions," remarked Anand. "I don't know when my second wish would be fulfilled."

"What's that?" queried the young man. "Let me help you fulfil that also."

"You may not be able to help me," said Anand in a

pitiful voice. "Only the king of the land will be able to help me."

To which the young man responded, "I may not be the king; I'm the prince, and he may heed my word."

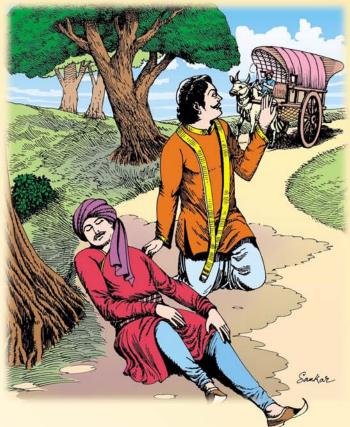
Anand's joy knew no bounds when he realised that he had saved the life of none other than a prince and hence he thought he could make use of his influence to popularise his immortal epic. The prince was, however, aghast when Anand told him point-blank that the king should recommend his epic to his the subjects. He thought of a way out. "How many people have by now listened to this epic?" he asked plainly.

"Some twelve persons, my friend," replied Anand.

"All right, we will take steps to see that the rest of the ten lakhs population also heard it and made their comments," said the prince. "But you must give me a promise that you won't write another epic before all those people have listened to your work."

Anand agreed. The next day they travelled to the palace, where the prince introduced him to the king.

He also announced to the public that Anand was greater than the author of the *Ramayana*, and whoever wanted to read his immortal epic could take it from him. But whenever anybody went to the prince, he said the script had been lost in a fire. Thus Anand's so-called epic was only known to people without anybody actually reading it. The vampire paused here and asked, "O King, if the prince did not like Anand's verses, why did he take it and yet did not give it to anyone to read? Why did he tell a lie that it was destroyed in a fire? In spite of



knowing the answers, if you still remain silent, your head will be blown into pieces."

Vikram replied, "The prince was aware that Anand's verses were deplorable and did not deserve to be read at all. Since he did not want to be impolite to Anand who had saved his life, he took it from him. As he felt that they were not worth reading, he lied that the script was lost."

As soon as Vikram gave this reply, the vampire along with the corpse gave him the slip.





The Knight who killed the Dragon



ong, long ago at the town of Silene in Libya there ruled a king who had a beautiful daughter named Sabra. He had a prosperous kingdom by a lake, devoted and loyal subjects, and everything that a king could wish for. But one day something dreadful happened that ruined it all and drowned the entire kingdom in terror. A terrible dragon entered the kingdom and made its home in the lake. It was the most dreadful monster you can imagine and was as blood-thirsty as it was cruel. It pushed itself right through the town gate and devoured all the cattle it could find. It breathed fire wherever it went, so things turned to ashes and crumbled down as dust. Trees died and flowers dried up and the grass turned to charcoal whenever the dragon appeared.

"Shut the gates!" ordered the king. "Don't let the

dreadful creature come in." The gates were shut but the dragon appeared and knocked against the wall which started shaking. The people were shaking in fear, too. "Please do something. Don't let the dragon kill us," they begged the king. "Go back to the lake," the king said to the dragon. "We will keep two sheep for you just outside the gate every day. You can eat those. But don't come inside our gates!"

The dragon went away and slithered into the lake. But everyone knew that he would break the wall if he did not find food and kill the people inside. The people lived in a nightmare ever since. They knew that their supply of animals would run out some day. What would they do then? And what would the dragon do? The dreaded moment arrived before long. There were no more animals left inside the gates to offer the dragon! "We have to offer the dragon human beings," said the king sadly, "there is no help for it. It is the only way to survive." "But whom should we sacrifice?" the people asked in fear. "I must be absolutely fair," said the king. "We shall make out a list with the names of everyone in the kingdom and take a lot each day. The name that comes up in the lot will be the person to face the dragon. What do you say?" "It is quite fair," said the people. "Under the circumstances, it's the only thing to do."

So the people were more terrorized than ever, living in constant fear of being the next victim. The dragon soon found that eating human beings was even better than eating animals. So it started appearing earlier and earlier each day, almost before it was dawn. Then one day something terrible happened. The day's lot brought up the name of Princess Sabra. "How could you allow them to include her name in the list?" cried the queen. "She is a princess, the princess of this land! I can't let her die." "I had to include every name," said the king in a sad voice, "Both yours and mine are there too. Perhaps I could go instead

of Sabra." "No, father," said Sabra in a firm voice. "I shall face the dragon tomorrow since my name has come up. We have to be fair to our people." "Yes, my child," said the king wiping his tears, "Oh, if only the dragon had never come! How happy we all were before it arrived to wreck our happiness." "And if only someone was brave and strong enough to kill it!" said Sabra. "It's no use wishing for the impossible," said the queen trying not to break down.

The next morning Sabra was up before dawn. She wore the white wedding dress her mother had made for her since it was to be the last day of her life. She shuddered as she thought of the dragon. She had seen it from her window one morning. It looked so horrible and frightening that she had closed her window and had kept it closed ever since so that she might never see it again. And now she would have to be devoured by the monster. The queen and the king embraced her tenderly before leading her outside the gate where the flag of their country fluttered in the air. Sabra stood under the flag waiting for the dragon to arrive. The king and the queen left her there because they did not dare to keep the gate

open. Before long the hushed silence was broken and Sabra could hear the dragon gliding out of the water and the sound of crumbling grass which were charred. She could also hear something else. It sounded like someone riding a horse. Who could it be? As Sabra turned her face, she saw a white horse and a handsome knight carrying a blazing sword and shield. There was a loud hissing sound from the lakeside as the dragon was almost upon her. But someone else reached her first. The brave knight hit the dragon with his sword that flashed like lightning. The dragon toppled for a moment. "Quick! Give me your girdle" cried the knight. Sabra tore off the white sash from her dress and gave it to the knight. The knight deftly looped it around the dragon's neck. In the meantime the people opened the gate and came out to see what had happened. The brave knight dragged the dragon right up to the

Chandamama

market place and cut off its head with his sword. How the people cheered! They went completely mad with joy and relief. "Who are you, brave knight?" asked Sabra in wonder, How could you kill it?" "I am George," said the knight, "I could kill it because I had the name of Christ on my lips. The dragon represented Evil and Evil can never exist where there is true faith." "Bravo, young man," said the king. "Live with us and wed my daughter. You shall be our next king." But George smiled and shook his head. "I am on a crusade," he said, "This is not my destination. But I pray that Princess Sabra might be happy." "Then share your faith with us," said the king, "the faith that gives one courage to face evil bravely and conquer it too." "Gladly," said George and shared with them the message of Christianity.

As he rode away on his white horse, once again the people saw his white flag fluttering in the breeze. They could also see that the flag had a single cross in red.

(St. George is the patron saint of England. This story, translated into English in the 12th century, is known as one of the Golden Legends) - By S.D.





Send your questions to : Ask Away

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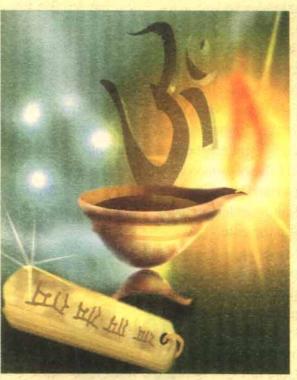
Who were the founding fathers of Hinduism? Jyotiranjan Biswal, Durgapur

The term Hinduism was coined during the British rule in India. As you know, the term Hindu itself is of Graeco-Arab origin, derived from the mighty river Sindhu that overwhelmed the foreigners and they named the whole subcontinent India, after Sindhu. However, this is not to suggest that the

essence of the term is also new.

What it refers to is a philosophy of life, a vision of the destiny of man and a quest for the basic questions that confront us, such as how did this creation come into being, what is the meaning of life, why do we die, why do we suffer, whether there is an ultimate Truth behind all the appearances and, if so, how to find it, so on and so forth.

India was singularly fortunate in having generations of seekers known as Rishis as the makers of its civilization, literature and practically all aspects of its culture. They gave us the Vedas, the world's first records of

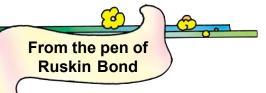


human aspiration for Truth and the revelations that came in response to that aspiration; they gave us the Upanishads, treatises of profound wisdom; they gave us the great epics, the Ramayana and Mahabharata that had had an immeasurable impact on the consciousness of the people of this subcontinent. No other epic of any other nation had ever mattered so much for its people as did these two works for India through the ages - not to speak of their influence even

on countries beyond India. The Rishis also gave us the *Puranas*, recording their experiences of the occult and supra-physical worlds.

They also were the authors of great systems of Indian philosophy.

Hence, we can call these Rishis as the founding fathers of Indian civilization at its highest. Even though much of their vision was distorted and even perverted, thanks to the collective ignorance of generations of people, the essence of what you call Hinduism can be defined as the quest for Truth Eternal – and that is why it was called the Sanatana Dharma.



No room for a leopard

first saw the leopard when I was crossing the small stream at the bottom of the hill. The ravine was so deep that for most of the day it remained in shadow. This encouraged many birds and animals to emerge from cover during the hours of daylight. Few people ever passed that way; only milkmen and charcoal burners from the surrounding villages. As a result the ravine had become a little haven for wildlife, one of the few natural sanctuaries left near Mussoorie.

Below my cottage was a forest of oak and maple and Himalayan rhododendron. A narrow path twisted its way down through the trees, over an open ridge where red sorrel grew wild, and then down steeply through a tangle of wild raspberries, creeping vines and slender rangal bamboo. At the bottom of the hill a path led onto a grassy verge surrounded by wild dogroses.

The streams ran close by the verge, tumbling over smooth pebbles, over rock worn yellow with age, on its way to the plains and to the little Song river and finally to the sacred Ganga.

Nearly every morning and sometimes during the day, I heard the cry of the barking deer. And in the evening walking through the forest, I disturbed parties of kaleej pheasants. The birds went gliding into the ravines on open, motionless wings. I saw pine martins and a handsome red fox. I recognised the footprints of a bear.

As I had not come to take anything from the jungle, the birds and animals soon grew accustomed to my face. Or possible they recognised my footsteps. After some time, my approach did not disturb them. A spotted forktail, which at first used to fly away, now remained perched on a boulder in the middle of the stream while I go across by means of other boulders only a few yards away.

The langurs in the oak and rhododendron trees, who would at first go leaping through the branches at my approach, now watched me with some curiosity as they munched up the tender green shoots of the oak. The young ones scuffled and wrestled like boys while their parents groomed each other's coats, stretching themselves out on the sunlit hillside. Beautiful animals with slim waists and long sinewy legs and tails full of character. But one evening as I passed, I heard them chattering in the trees and I was not the cause of their excitement.

As I crossed the stream and began climbing the hill, the grunting and chattering increased as though the langurs were trying to warn me of some hidden danger. A shower of pebbles came rattling down the steep hillside and I looked up to see a sinewy orange gold leopard, poised on a rock about 20 ft above me.

The leopard was not looking towards me but it had its head thrust attentively forward in the direction of the ravine. It must have sensed my presence because it slowly turned its head and looked down at me. It seemed a little puzzled at my presence there and, when to give myself courage, I clapped my hands sharply, the leopard sprang away into the thickets making absolutely no sound as it melted into the shadow. I had disturbed the animal in its quest for food. But a little later I heard the quickening cry of a barking deer as it fled through the forest—the hunt was still on.

The leopard, like other members of the cat family, is nearing extinction in India and I was surprised to find one so close to Mussoorie. Probably the deforestation that had been taking place in the surrounding hills had driven the deer into this green valley and the leopard naturally had

followed. It was some weeks before I saw the leopard again although I was often made aware of its presence. A dry rasping cough sometimes gave it away.

At times I felt certain that I was being followed. And once when I was late getting home I was startled by a family of porcupines running about in a clearing. I looked around nervously and saw two bright eyes staring at me from the thicket. I stood still, my heart banging away against my ribs. Then the eyes danced away and I realized they were only fireflies.

In May and June when the hills were brown and dry, it was always cool and green near the stream where ferns, maidenhair and long grasses continued to thrive.

One day I found the remains of a barking deer that had been partially eaten. I wondered why the leopard had not hidden the remains of his meal and decided that he had been disturbed while eating. Then climbing the hill I met a party of shikaris resting beneath the oaks. They asked me if I had seen a leopard. I said I had not. They said they knew there was a leopard in the forest. Leopard skins, they told me, were selling in Delhi at more than a thousand rupees each! Of course there was a ban on the export of its skin but they gave me to understand that there were ways and means... I thanked them for their information and moved on, feeling uneasy and disturbed.

MAHE

The shikaris had seen the carcass of the deer and the leopard's pug marks and they kept coming to the forest. Almost every evening I heard their guns banging away for they were ready to fire at almost everything.

"There's a leopard around," they told me. "You should carry a gun."

"I don't have one," I said.

There were fewer birds to be seen and even the langurs had moved on. The red fox did not show itself and the pine martins who had earlier become bold, now dashed into hiding at my approach. The smell of one human is like the smell of any other.

I thought no more of the men. My attitude towards them was similar to the attitude of the denizens of the forest. They were men, unpredictable and to be avoided if possible.

One day after crossing the stream, I climbed Pari Tibba, a bleak, scrub-covered hill where no one lived. This was a stiff undertaking because there was no path to the top and I had to scramble up a precipitous rock face with the help of rocks and roots which were apt to come away in my groping hand. But at the top was a plateau with a few pine trees, their upper

branches catching the wind and humming softly. There I found the ruins of what must have been the first settlers—just a few piles of rubble now overgrown with weeds, sorrel, dandelion and nettles.

As I walked through the roofless ruins, I was struck by the silence that surrounded me, the absence of birds and animals, the sense of complete desolation. The

silence was so absolute that it seemed to be shouting in my ears. But there was something else of which I was becoming increasingly aware—the strong feline odor of one of the cat family. I paused and looked about. I was alone. There was no movement of dry leaf or loose stone. The ruins were, for the most part, open to the sky. Their rotting rafters had collapsed and joined together to form a low passage like the entrance to a mine. This dark cavern seemed to lead down.

The smell was stronger when I approached this spot so I stopped again and waited there wondering if I had discovered the lair of the leopard, wondering if the animal was now at rest after a night's hunt. Perhaps it was crouched there in the dark, watching me, recognizing me, knowing me as a man who walked alone in the forest without a weapon. I like to think that he was there and that he knew me and that he acknowledged my visit in the friendliest way—by ignoring me altogether.

Perhaps I had made him confident—too confident, too careless, too trusting of the human in his midst. I did not venture any further. I did not seek physical contact or even another glimpse of that beautiful sinewy body, spring from rock to rock... It was his trust I wanted and I think he gave it to me. But did the leopard, trusting one man, make the mistake of bestowing his trust on others? Did I, by casting out all fear—my own fear and the leopard's protective fear—leave him defenceless?

Because next day, coming up the path from the stream, shouting and beating their drums were the shikaris. They had a long bamboo pole across their shoulder and slung from the pole, feet up, head down, was the lifeless body of the leopard. It had been shot in the neck and in the head.

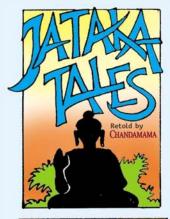
"We told you there was a leopard!" they shouted, in great good humour. "Isn't he a fine specimen?"

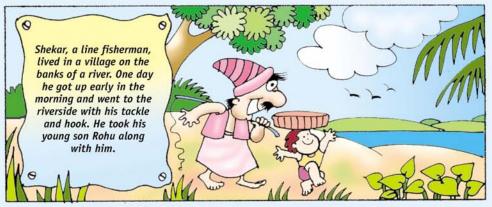
"Yes," I said, "he was a beautiful leopard."

I walked home through the silent forest. It was very silent, almost as though the birds and animals knew that their trust had been violated.

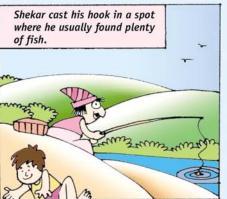
I remembered the lines of a poem by D H Lawrence and as I climbed the steep and lonely path to my home, the words beat out their rhythm in my mind-'*There was no room in the world for a mountain lion and me*.'

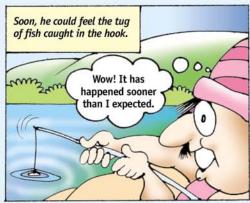
Jataka Tales



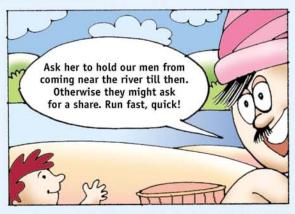












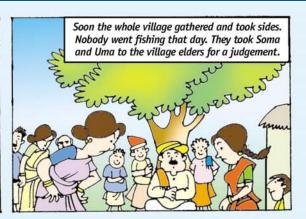




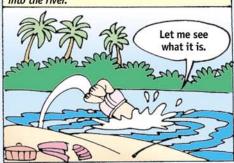
Selfish couple

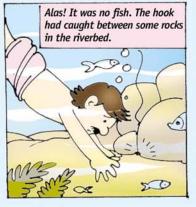


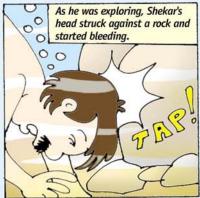




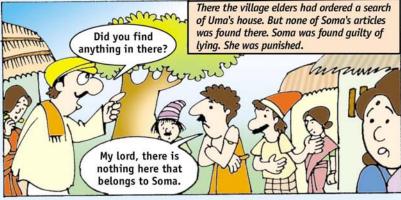
Meanwhile, at the riverside, Shekar couldn't drag up the big catch. He took off his clothes and dived into the river.

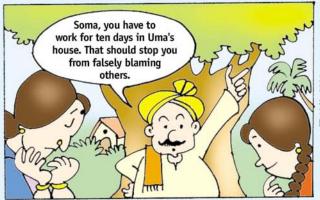






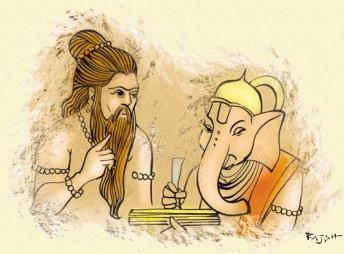












Mahabharata in frescoe

The Ajanta and Ellora frescoes in Maharashtra are world famous. In the south, similar paitings were seen in places like Sittanavasal, Tanjore and Tirunandikkara—all in Tamilnadu. Unfortunately, except the frescoes in the Brihadeeswara temple in Tanjore, those in the other two places have faded beyond restoration. For security reasons, the second floor of the Tanjore temple, where the walls are decorated with frescoes, has remained closed for some time. With a view to creating an interest in frescoe

painting, the South Zone Cultural Centre in Tanjore has thrown open its walls measuring 250 square feet for a 'serial' frescoe depicting the *Mahabharata* story. There will be 21 panels, the first depicting sage Vedavyasa "dictating" the story to Lord Ganesa who acts as the scribe, and the last one showing the end of Duryodhana in the war. The colours used are made from leaves, flowers, fruits, barks of trees, and powdered stones. This work is being undertaken by a family from Kerala. The father paints the wall with the base colour; the son makes the line drawings, and the mother fills them with colours.

Ramayana in 300 versions

here are multiple versions of the famous epic in all Indian languages, including Tulu and such tribal languages as Bhili and Santali. In Sanskrit alone, there are 25 different versions. How popular our epic is in the neighbouring south east countries can be seen from the versions in Annamese, Balinese, Cambodian, Chinese, Javanese, Laotian, Malay, Thai and Tibetan. Of course, there are quite a few versions in all the European languages. A well-known historian has remarked that the *Ramayana* "does not belong to any

one moment in history; it has it own history which lies embedded in the many versions which were woven round the theme at different times and places."



Saturday's Shocks and Surprises

nce there was a poor farmer. He had three sons. After giving birth to the third son, his wife passed away. The farmer brought them up with great difficulty. Because of the affection he gave them, the boys were

very much attached to him. When they grew up, they helped him in their fields. As years went by, the farmer found suitable brides for his sons and they all lived a peaceful life. It was agreed that every day one daughter-in-law would stay back at home to look after the house, attend to all chores, prepare food for everybody and then wait for their return from the fields in the evening.

One Saturday, it was the turn of the youngest daughter-in-law to stay back at home. After the men and the two daughters-in-law had left for the fields, she swept the house, washed the courtyard and decorated it with *rangoli*. She then went inside, cleaned the vessels and started cooking. Just then she heard a voice from outside.

She went to the porch and saw that it was a beggar in tattered clothes. She took pity on him. "I'm scratching all over my body. Will you please give me some oil so that I can take an oil bath?" he pleaded.

The woman went inside and fetched a bottle of oil and poured some oil into his hands. He applied the oil all over his body and looked around. "Over there is a pond,"

she told him. "After your bath, don't go away. I shall give you some food."

The beggar smiled at her and went for his bath. On his way back, he plucked some large leaves and made a

platter out of them. The woman served him and he ate the food with relish. "I haven't had such good food for several days," he said as he turned to go. He did not throw away the platter, but tucked it between the thatches of the roof. The girl saw this, but soon forgot everything about it.

When the family sat together in the evening, to eat their food, they found the dishes extra delicious and were full of praise for the youngest daughter-in-law's cooking. There was no chance for her to tell them about the beggar.

Came another Saturday and it was the turn of the second daughter-in-law to stay back and look after the house. She went through all the chores and was about to start cooking when she heard a voice. It was a beggar. When she came

out, he asked her, "Daughter, please give me some oil; I'm suffering from rashes, so I want to take an oil bath."

She noticed the rashes on his face and hands and found him loathsome. She angrily said, "We haven't kept any oil to be given to beggars like you. Go away!" She stomped back into the house. She did not see the bottle of oil in the way and knocked it down. This made her



angry. She then head the beggar again.

"All right, I shall go away," he said, "but could you give me a *roti*? I haven't eaten since morning, and I'm feeling very hungry."

This time, the girl did not come out. "Oh! you're still hanging around? I told you, go away!" There was some dirty water in a vessel, which she threw at him through the window.

"So this is what you would do to a poor beggar! You won't get any food to eat today!" he cursed her and went away. Fortunately, she did not hear what he said, and so was not aware of the curse.

The girl now got busy in cooking and then waited for everybody to come back. As usual they sat down to eat. The second daughter-in-law, who was about to serve, was shocked to see that all the vessels in which she had kept dishes were empty. They were not only empty, but they looked as if someone had eaten the food and left the vessels clean. She remembered that she had kept the vessels covered with proper lids.

The farmer, who was equally affectionate to his daughters-

in-law, did not want to embarrass her with any remark. He asked his other daughters-in-law to help the woman cook food. Surprise was in store for them. The tin in which they had stored flour was found empty. The basket in which vegetables had been kept was also empty. The can which used to contain cooking oil did not have a single drop. The girl could not give any explanation as she was now in a dazed condition. She did not tell them about the beggar's visit.

The kind-hearted farmer called his second son and together they went to the market and bought whatever groceries and vegetables they wanted. The daughters-in-law together cooked the food

and all of them had a late dinner.

Days passed; it was another Saturday and the eldest daughter-in-law was left behind to look after the house. She had hardly kindled the fire for cooking when she heard a voice. "Could I have some oil, O kind lady?" The woman came out and saw a beggar who repeated the question adding, "I'm itching all over the body and I wish to take an oil bath."

The woman was angry as she had been disturbed in her work. She wondered whether the beggar would not make other requests if she were to oblige him with oil. She also had a lurking suspicion: Would this beggar have eaten all the dishes and stolen the groceries and vegetables the previous Saturday?

"You rogue! I'm sure you were the one who stole our flour, vegetables, and oil. Go away this minute!" she shouted at him.

The beggar protested. "Good lady! I'm not a thief. I won't dare commit any theft. Please give me some oil and just one roti. I shall

pray for your happiness!"

"I don't need your prayers and blessing," the woman said harshly. She went inside and fetched a stick. Brandishing it in front of the beggar, she threatened him. "Will you go away or shall I force you to leave the place?"

"O lady! You've refused my request!" he said, looking sternly into her face. "Whatever you cook today will not be accepted by those for whom you cook!" said the beggar as if he was cursing her. He then went away.

The woman took him to be mad and did not give a second thought to what he said. She cooked food as usual and waited for all others to come back. When they returned and sat for dinner, she brought all the dishes and one after the other she opened the lids. She was horrified

to see that one dish had worms crawling all over; another dish had fleas and another was full of ants and other insects. She wept aloud and ran back into the kitchen.

The farmer realised the situation and consoled himself and others by saying, "I'm afraid we've angered our gods and goddesses. Otherwise, why should things happen the way they did last Saturday and today? We must do something to propitiate them."

Once again, the farmer and his eldest son went to the market and fetched groceries, oil and vegetables and asked the three daughters-in-law to cook their dinner.

The following Saturday, it was once again the turn of the youngest daughter-in-law. After attending to all chores, she was about to start cooking when she heard the familiar voice. It was the beggar asking for oil. She came and asked, "You came here some days ago and I gave you oil. Haven't you got rid of the rashes and itching?" She went inside, fetched the bottle of oil, and poured some oil into his hands. As he smeared the body, she said, "You may go and take a bath in that pond and by the

time you come back, I shall have prepared food."

Like on the previous day, he came with a platter made of leaves. He ate the food and blessed the woman. "May you always cook and enjoy hearty meals! May you and your husband enjoy long life!" On his way out, he pushed the platter into the roof and went away. The girl noticed what he was doing but kept quiet.

In the evening, everybody relished the food the girl had cooked. The farmer raised his head and said, "The whole thing is strange! One Saturday, the food was missing; the following Saturday, the food went rotten with

worms and insects. But today, the food is delicious! It looks as though the gods and goddesses are no longer angry with us! Wonder what happened today!"

The youngest daughter-in-law who, after serving everybody, had just then sat down to eat her meal. She narrated the visit of the beggar on two Saturdays when she was at home and also revealed how he had shoved the platter into the roof.

The farmer got up and went out to see whether the platters were still there. They were. When he pulled one platter, it came off into his hands, full of precious stones. He then pulled out

the other platter and saw that it contained gold coins. There was surprise writ on the

faces of the farmer, his three sons and their wives. The eldest and the second daughter-in-law now remembered the visits of the beggar and how they had sent him away without giving him oil or any food.

The farmer said, "I presume it was Lord Saneeswar himself who had come here in the guise of a beggar. He is now pleased and he has given us this gift for all time."

Their neighbours and other villagers soon heard the story and from then on they made oil a main offering to Saneeswar, whose day is Saturday.



A PAGE FROM INDIAN HISTORY

The Garden of Roshan Ara

If you walk along the Roshan Ara Road near the Old Sabzi Mandi in Delhi, you will come across what once used to be the garden of Princess Roshan Ara, daughter of Shah Jahan and younger sister of Princess Jahan Ara. It is now a beautiful, landscaped park with a striking Japanese garden and the Roshan Ara Club built during the British Raj. In a corner of the green expanse lies a tomb in a neglected state. It is the tomb of Princess Roshan Ara. However, this garden was not meant to house the tomb of its creator when it was first made. It is the irony of fate that it should be remembered as such. Or some might call it divine retribution!

When you read the history of a country, you come

across many kinds of happenings—stories of bravery, loyalty and glorious sacrifice, stories of heroes facing the enemy bravely and dying for one's motherland. Side by side, you also come across stories of betrayal, cruelty and duplicity. We remember the first kind with admiration and the second kind with disgust. But we should know about both

and that is what history depicts.
While most people remember
Princess Jahan Ara with

because there are two sides to reality

appreciation because she stood by her father loyally, to the extent of sharing

his captivity, not many remember Princess Roshan Ara because there is not much to

remember or admire

After the Red Fort in Delhi was built and the royal family had moved from Agra to

take up residence in the newly built city of Shahjahanabad, the members of the royal family got busy creating new places and buildings for their new capital. Princess Jahan Ara, the favourite daughter of the Emperor, had already laid out the Chandni Chowk and Begum ka Bagh. It was now Roshan Ara's turn. She laid out the Roshan Ara Garden in 1650. She was the favourite sister of Aurangzeb who grabbed the throne some years later and imprisoned his father.

Roshan Ara actively supported Aurangzeb in the war of succession. As a result she had an important role in Aurangzeb's court. In fact, she was the sole mistress of the palace and enjoyed all the privileges of a queen.

With unlimited wealth at her disposal and her brother's total support, Roshan Ara saw to

it that her garden was far more spectacular than her sister's. Jahan Ara had meant her garden to be a place where not just the royal family but also the ladies of the court could relax and enjoy themselves. Roshan Ara's garden was her personal holiday resort and her special summer house.

Travellers who visited
Delhi during the period
have written about the
Roshan Ara Garden in
their memoirs. One
writer of the time says:
"It must have been a
gay sight when Begum
Roshan Ara's elephant
procession arrived here
from the Delhi Fort. The

huge animals, with their gold-

embroidered coverings, their solemn tread, their jingling silver bells ... and then, the princess herself, escaping from the noise and heat of the royal palace, came in her splendid rose-curtained seat, swung between two smaller elephants, to while away a few hours in her cool, flower- scented, fountain-sprinkled garden."

But the garden eventually proved to be more than a pleasure resort for Roshan Ara.

Those familiar with the history of the Mughal family cannot but realize that it is not men alone who go crazy over the tussle for power. Sometimes even women lose their heads (and moral scruples) in the power game. This is precisely what happened to Roshan Ara.

She completely lost her head with so much power and wanted it to go on for ever, even if it meant treachery of the worst kind.

Aurangzeb fell seriously ill in 1664. So much so, the royal family wondered if he could possibly survive. The next in the line of succession was Shah Alam, the eldest son of Aurangzeb, who was the rightful heir. But Roshan Ara realized that she would no longer continue to enjoy the same kind of power once Shah Alam became the emperor. So she was determined to prevent it no matter what she had to do to ensure it. She was so confident of her own ability and cleverness that she stole Aurangzeb's signet ring while he was too ill to realize its loss. Then she hatched a clever plot to replace Shah Alam with his six

year old brother Azam. This would mean that Roshan Ara would continue to

enjoy total power and supremacy as the Regent until Azam grew up and was old enough to be crowned emperor. Roshan Ara dared to carry out this plan because she was confident that Aurangzeb would die and never discover that the order to replace Shah Alam had been forged by her.

But Aurangzeb recovered from his illness and discovered her plot. Needless to say, he was livid with rage when he realized that the sister whom he had loved and trusted and had given so much, could do something.

Roshan Ara lost her position immediately. After she died, not long after this happened, she was buried in her own garden of pleasure. Perhaps she took her own life or was poisoned by a supporter of Aurangzeb. Whatever it might have been, her favourite pavilion now become her last resting place.

The Roshan Ara Garden was grossly neglected until Colonel Cracroft took it up, renovating and modernizing it. He had all the ruined Mughal structures pulled down. Everything except the tomb itself. The new garden became the fashionable Roshan Ara Club, a favourite meeting place of the British during their reign. The landscaping has been totally changed now. All that remains of its Mughal past is the name and the legend of Roshan Ara.

- By Swapna Dutta

Warning comes true

Prince Jozef (1763 – 1813) of Poland had been warned by a gypsy that he would be killed by a magpie. He avoided birds all his life, and was drowned while crossing Germany's Elster river. Incidentally, Elster means magpie!



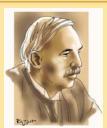
We have an eminent science columnist to write this feature from this month. Meet Mr. Rosscote Krishna Pillai, now based in Trivandrum after his retirement as a top executive in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. He has authored several books, including Children's Illustrated Science Dictionary, the first of its kind published in India; written more than 700 articles on science-related topics for children's magazines and other periodicals; was a broadcaster on science on the national channel for several years; and was a science Quiz-master for AIR. Frequent participation in national seminars has helped him get a "ringside view of India's science development".

August-born:Lavoisier

rance, which gave to the world the eternal slogan, 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity', also became notorious for the injustice done to one of its most famous scientists, Lavoisier, who is generally considered as the 'father of modern chemistry'.

Antoine Lavoisier, born on August 26, 1743, is celebrated for his discovery of the role of oxygen in combustion and giving the gas its name and also for his major contribution to formulating the metric system of weights and measures. When he was at the pinnacle of fame, he was imprisoned on false charges, convicted, and finally guillotined the very next day, May 8, 1794.

It is said, when he appealed in the court for time to complete an important scientific work, the judge trying him remarked: "The Republic does not need scientists." Lavoisier wrote from the gaol cell:" I shall leave behind me a little knowledge and perhaps a little glory. What more can one expect in this world?"



The Last Potato: Lord Rutherford, the famous physicist, was born as the second of 12 sons of a farmer in New Zealand. One day he was digging potatoes on his father's farm when his mother came and told him that he had been awarded a

scholarship to study in Cambridge University. Flinging down his spade, he said excitedly: "That's the last potato I'll dig!" He postponed his marriage and without losing any time, he left for England.

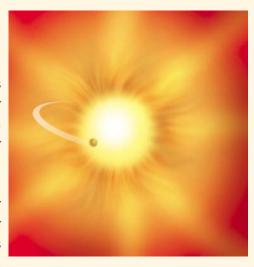
Raman on Alcohol: C.V. Raman was visiting Europe, when at a party he was offered an alcoholic drink. A strict teetotaller himself, Raman chuckled and remarked: "You can see the Raman effect on alcohol, but not the effect of alcohol on Raman."



A flying kiss from Venus

stronomers and sky-gazers across the world remained glued to the telescopes in observatories, while hundreds of curious onlookers stood in the open eagerly waiting for the enactment of an enchanting heavenly spectacle. It was indeed an astronomical event exactly predicted to happen on June 8, almost 122 years after its last occurrence. This eagerly-awaited phenomenon was the "transit of Venus".

As the sun rose in the sky around 10.45, a dark spot appeared on its brilliant glowing face at one end and in about six hours this spot slowly crossed to the other end of the sun's visible face and then vanished from view. The small, dark,



circular disc was how the planet Venus, usually seen as a shining star in the sky, appeared to viewers from the earth. It was as though the sun was getting a flying kiss from the Venus. This planet, nearer to the sun than the earth, was then moving between the earth and sun.

All planets move in ellipses with the sun at one focus. The orbital plane of Venus is inclined at an angle of about three and a quarter degrees to the earth's orbital plane. Because of this inclination, a transit occurs only when the two planets, Earth and Venus, pass near one of the nodes—ascending and descending nodes—of Venus at about the same time. A transit of Venus happens only four times in 243 years; the intervals between the transits are successively 8, 105-1/2, 8, 105-1/2 years. The next transit of Venus will occur eight years from now, on June 6, 2012. The first transit that was observed was in 1639.

Science Quiz

- After which planet is Friday named?
 a.Pluto b. Jupiter c. Venus d. Mercury
- To measure what is a pluviometer used?
 a.sound b. density c.pressure d.rain
- 3. Who invented the mercury thermometer? a.Celsius b. Kelvin c.Fahrenheit d.Rankin
- 4. Name the first spacecraft which landed on the moon.
 - a.Ap<mark>ollo</mark>-11 b.Vostok c.Luna d.Lunik- II
- 5. Which is the lightest metal?
 a.aluminium b.lithium c.caesium d.nickel

4. d.Lunik- II<mark>, 5. b.lit</mark>hium

1. c.Venus, $\frac{\Delta}{\Delta}$. d.rain, 3. c. Fahrenheit (1720),

:JəwsuA

Scientists Speak

There must be no barriers to freedom of inquiry. There is no place for dogma in science. The scientist is free and must be free to ask any question, to doubt any assertion, to seek for any evidence, to correct any errors.

- J.Robert Oppenheimer

Science demands from a man all his life.

- Ivan Pavlov

... the human mind is a peculiar compound of sublimity and slime.

- Michael Faraday

Genius is one per cent inspiration and ninetynine per cent perspiration.

- Thomas Alva Edison



LEGENDS FROM OTHER LANDS (CHINA)

THE GENERAL WHO OFFENDED THE PRINCESS

he country today known as China, with Beijing for its capital, did not exist at the time when this happened. The vast land was then divided into so many small kingdoms. One of them was Chu.

Some 2,600 years ago Chu was ruled by King Zhuang. That was a time when the kingdoms often fought among themselves. King Zhuang had become victorious in one such battle. He threw a big banquet in honour of his generals, ministers and other prominent officers who had contributed to his victory.

The reception was arranged in the palace courtyard, under large canopies. Musicians played their instruments as some of the best dancing girls performed on a platform. The guests were served with the most delicious dishes and drinks and they were in a very happy mood. Their happiness became even greater when the king asked his



daughter, Princess Xu, to go round the courtyard and sprinkle perfume on the guests. Princess Xu, according to the popular impression, was the most beautiful of all the maidens in the country. The guests felt specially honoured to be greeted by her through that gesture.

All of a sudden a strong gust of wind swept across the courtyard. It not only extinguished all the candles, at once plunging the crowd in darkness, but even shook the decorated wooden pillars holding up the canopies. Of course, there was no chaos or indiscipline, though the music and dance stopped. The guests waited for the attendants to light up the candles again.

But Princess Xu, sobbing, ran to the royal seat and whispered in the king's ear, "Father, something terrible has happened. One of the generals had the audacity to pull me towards him the moment it was dark. I wriggled out of his arm, but not without ripping the ribbon off his coat. Please order the candles to be lighted. It will be easy for us to locate the culprit."

The king fondled his daughter and smoothed her wounded feelings and stood up to make some announcement.

"Pay attention to us, our dear guests," began the king.

The princess could imagine what her father would say. To touch a princess without her consent was a crime and an instant death was the usual punishment for the offender. The general who misbehaved with her had forfeited his life.

"Attention, please," said the king again. "Today is a very special night. A bloody war is over and we are celebrating peace. The ribbons on the coats of the generals are the symbols of their military status. But we sit here as people of peace. I suggest that all of you remove your ribbons on this occasion as a mark of our love for peace. Please do so immediately."

The guests greeted the king's suggestion with shouts

of appreciation and joy and removed their ribbons. The attendants were busy lighting the candles. Things became normal again; music and dance resumed, and the feast went on in full swing till midnight.

After the guests departed, the king told the princess, "My daughter, I understand your anguish. The general who showed discourtesy towards you could have become a bit drunk. In any case it was a feast in their honour, for their having bravely fought for our kingdom. Once the man's offence would have become known to all, we could not but have punished him. Imagine the fate of the feasting occasion. Gloom would have dominated the atmosphere. To see one of their colleagues punished with death would not have been a pleasant memory for the other generals. Then, all said and done, we cannot be sure of the man's motive. Even to locate him and enquire about it would have dampened the spirit of the festivity. So, my dear child, be calm and compassionate."

Just after a year had passed when the kingdom of Chu was attacked by a hostile neighbour. King Zhuang himself led the army, but at a sudden turn of events, he was surrounded by the enemy generals. There was no escape for him. He was on the verge of falling to the sword of the enemy when one of his officers made a daring entry into the ring and with a lightning swing of his sword, killed the would-be killer of his king.

That changed the course of the war. The enemy retreated. King Zhuang became victorious.

"We must reward you very specially," announced the king the next day, in an atmosphere of peace.

"My lord, it is not necessary. You had rewarded me with my life only a year ago," politely said the officer.

"What do you mean?" asked the surprised king.

The officer then said that he was the general who had offended the princess. It was unintentional. As the terrific wind shook the wooden pillar behind the princess, he tried to drag her away.

There was no time for him to reflect on his action. But had the king decided to punish him, he could not have found any opportunity to explain his conduct. The princess must have been keen to identify him by the loss of his ribbon. How magnanimous it was of the king to have spared him of the embarrassment by asking all the generals to take off their ribbons. It was his gratitude for the king that made him risk

his life and save him.

The king embraced the general. When the princess learnt about it, she shed two drops of tears of gratitude, one for her father sparing the general's life a year ago and the other for the general saving her father's life.







The 77th National Spelling Bee for students was held in Washington in June last. Akshay Buddiga of Indian origin, an 8th Class student of Colarado, was placed 2nd. He tripped while spelling out just one word AUTOCHTHONOUS and had to concede the first place to 14-year-old David Tidmarsh who collected US \$12,000 as prize money. In 2002, it was Akshay's elder brother, Pratyush, who became champion.

Low-cost speed governor

he speed governors fixed on public transport vehicles cost anything between Rs 25,000 and 40,000. A 9th Class student of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan school in Calicut, Kerala, called P.Krishnakant, has invented a device with a similar function that costs less than Rs.5,000. This needs only an RPM sensor and a micro-processor connected to the fuel pipes in buses and similar vehicles. It can be fitted outside, unlike the common speed governors. Thirteen-year-old Krishnakant prepared a model and sent it to President Dr.A.P.J.Abdul Kalam, who passed it on to the Department of Science and Technology, which has now come forward with an offer of technical assistance and funds to help the teen-ager to produce more units before going in for commercial production. The project has received recognition under the

Indian win in US marathon

ifteen year old Gautam Peri, a high school student of Sanjose, California, came fourth in the under-19 group in the *San Francisco Chronicle* marathon. He was the second youngest among more than 1,900 participants. He clocked 3 hours 46 minutes 47 seconds. The very youngest, who is a 12-year-old boy, finished two hours and 1,398 places behind Gautam.

Gautam and family had migrated to the USA from Hyderabad. He has shown keen interest in running races. After running his first marathon, Gautam commented on his performance thus: "I am satisfied, but my goal was to finish under 3:15. It was hard to concentrate when I was running about 20 miles by myself. The scenery kept me interested. In a couple of years, I want to be running with the lead pack." Incidentally, Gautam has kept alive his knowledge of Telugu and continues to be a regular reader of the Telugu edition of *Chandamama*.

DPEP programme.

CHANDAMAMA

PRESENTS

KALEIDOSCOPE

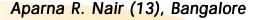
MY EXPEDITION TO MARS

One Sunday, I was watching a TV programme, "Mars Mission". Later, I had my supper and went to bed. Lying on the bed, I began imagining the picture of Mars, wondering how it differs from the earth and, if I were to land there, what kind of life I would lead.

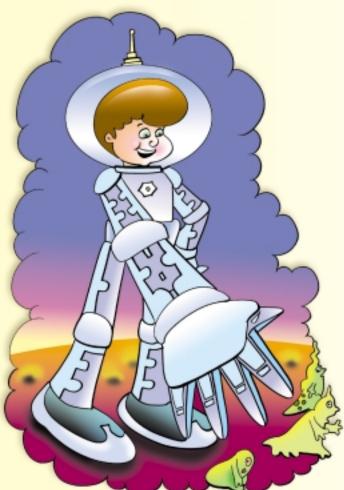
Next morning, I was on my way to school, when I was pulled out from my school van and pushed into a spaceship. The spaceship took off and landed on Mars. I got down and walked outside for some time. The planet had a nice landscape. Suddenly I was feeling hungry. There was nothing on the planet except stones and rocks. So, I got inside the spaceship in search of food. I saw something wrapped with a silver foil. I opened it and hungrily gobbled the pizzas and crispies and went out of the spaceship again. I wanted to know if there were any creatures

on the red planet. I was walking on and on. I came across a

hill. I walked up to the foot of the hill and watched. Suddenly a horrible creature appeared before me. His whole body was made up of spikes and thorns. The neck was very long and thick. The head had two long ears and a horn on the tip of the head. The body was six times the size of an elephant. Though the body was huge, the head looked funny. I imagined that I would be the first person to have seen a creature on Mars. While I was imagining my future, the creature roared at me. Then I got scared and I started running. I did not have any hope of surviving. A doubt arose in my mind whether I would be at all alive to narrate my adventure on the red planet. I was running faster and faster. I stumbled and fell down. The beast shook me all over. I started screaming. Then I woke up. They were not the hands of any creature but those of my parents who seem to have heard me screaming. I now feel ashamed; it was all a dream.



KALEID@SC@PE KALEID@SC@PE KALEID@SC@PE



A DREAM JOURNEY

I had a dream last night I thought I was in space, In a city where aliens ran At quite a frightful pace. They ran because I was a giant And they were puny creatures, I noticed that they had slits on the face And other funny features. In another city I was tall but an inch Beside the metres tall giants, I was taken to an office to find They had inch-high clients. Suddenly I fell into a well Which was very very deep, Only to find that I was in bed Just waking up from deep sleep.

Aditya R. (13), Pune

GOD LOVES ME

God loves me very much,
And I love him too,
And when I pray to him,
He gives me lots of things to do.
Sometimes I offer God flowers,
And sometimes I offer him garlands,
And sometimes I offer prayers of mine,
And sometimes I offer my happiness and joy.

Vhahbiz F. Lala (8), Mumbai





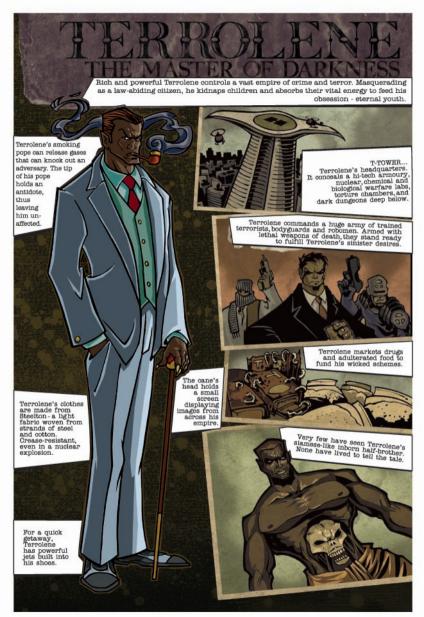


PICNIC AT MISERY ISLAND PART III

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



POWER SUPPLY

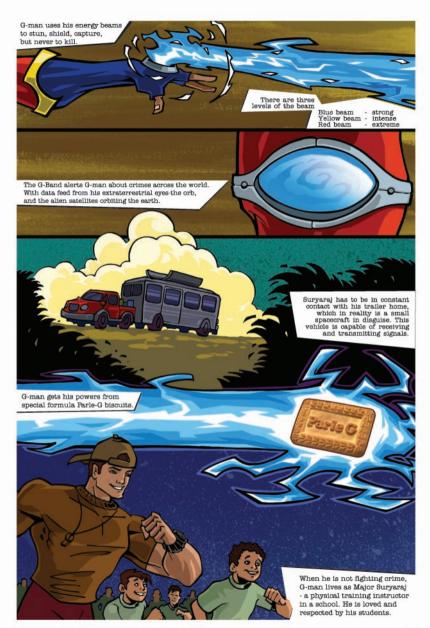






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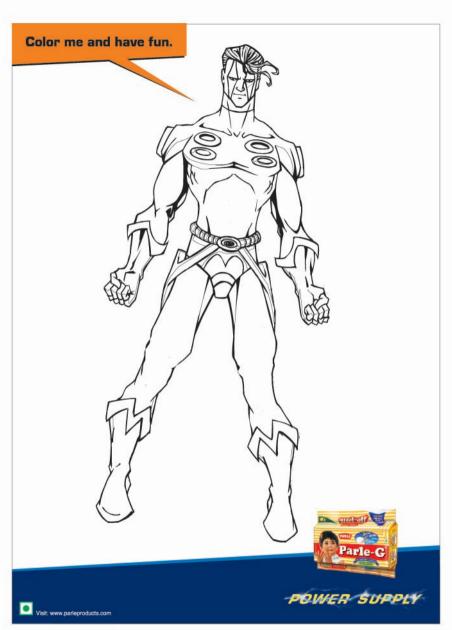
Chandamama August 2004



Chandamama August 2004







KALEID@SC@PE KALEID@SC@PE KALEID@SC@PE



An elephant and an ant were at play. Suddenly, the elephant's mother came in search of him, to ask him to stop play and study.

Elephant (to ant): Brother, my mother is coming in search of me. But I want to play with you. What shall I do?

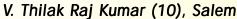
Ant: Don't worry, brother, you hide behind my back.



G.S. Anush (11), Sohar

Science teacher: I just told you that fireflies glow in the dark. Any questions?

Student: Where do they get their batteries from?





Teacher: I had asked you to draw an open umbrella. But you have drawn a closed umbrella. Why?

Student: Ma'am, it's not raining now!

Sunita Pal (14), Nayagarh

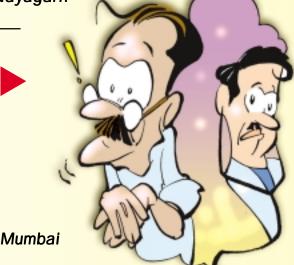
One day, a doctor called on an old man and said, "Sir, I've some good news as well as bad news for you."

"Let me hear the good news first," said the old man.

"The good news is that you've 24 hours to live."

"Oh! Great! What's the bad news?"

"I'm sorry, but I was supposed to tell you that yesterday!"



Ankita Bhat (11), Mumbai

PUZZLE

FOR COMPUTER WIZ KIDS!

Are you computer savvy? Nowadays with the advances in Science and Technology, people are coming closer to each other with the help of the worldwideweb and the electronic mail. So go, get a head start. Find out how much you know about computers and the Internet by searching the grid at right with the help of the clues given below.

CLUES:

- 1. A computer high level language.
- 2. A popular search engine.
- 3. You can use this to send graphics, sound or animation files to your friends through e-mail.
- 4. Hyper Text Transfer Protocol
- 5. A computer language as simple to learn as 123: 123
- 6. A primary volatile memory.
- 7. The first page of every website.
- 8. A secondary storage device with capacity = 40 GB
- 9. A popular website dedicated to Yahooligans.
- 10. A recent virus which infects one out of every 5 e-mails.
- 11. You use this to send a copy of your e-mail to another one.
- 12. Modulator Demodulator
- 13. A secondary storage device with capacity = 650 MB
- 14. Speed mail through net.
- 15. Central Processing Unit.

Rijumone Choudhuri (12), Meerut

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RIDDLES

1. Which is the coolest alphabet in English?



В

- 3. Anil Kumble will have one Thumps up bottle to give Sachin Tendulkar. Why?

D. Hasan Chaitanya (10), Wanaparthy

Because obener)

3. Because he

(2-----9lim--

condition)

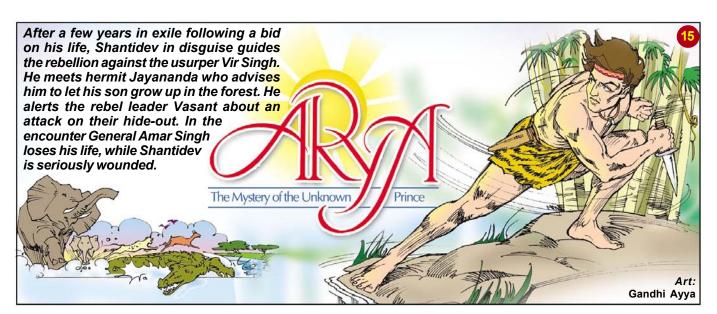
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Riddles:

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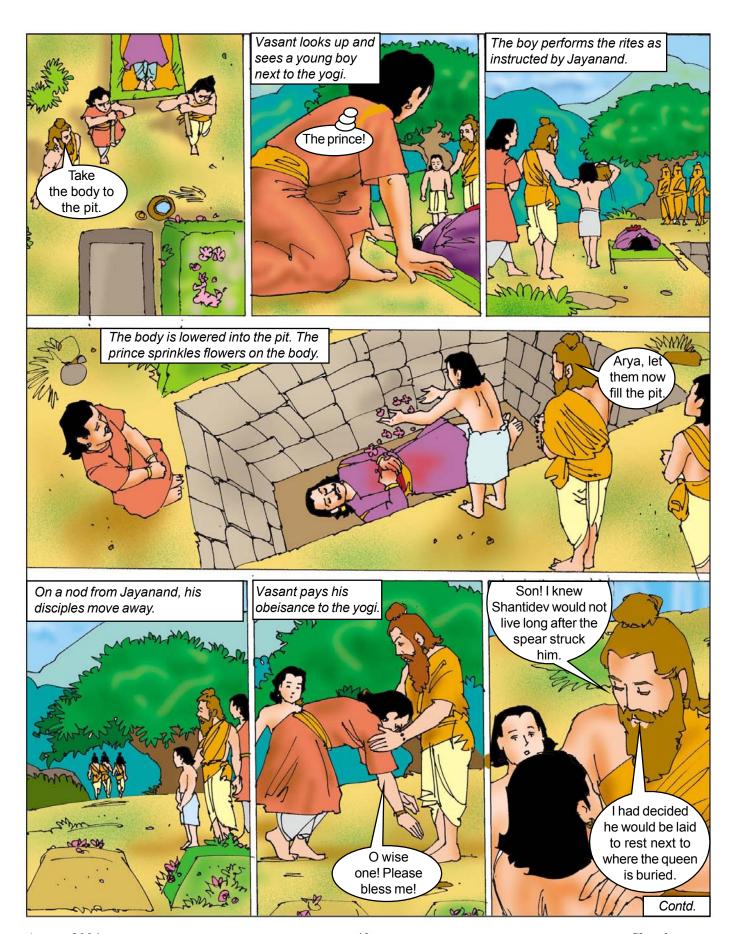
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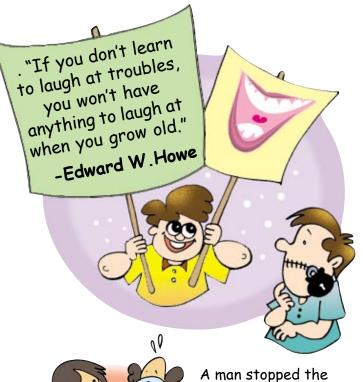












A man stopped the doctor on the street one summer and said, "You remember, doctor, you cured my rheumatism ten years ago?"

"Yes, I do," said the doctor.

"Well," the man said, "I just wonder if you still think it is unsafe for me to take a bath yet?"

Laugh till you drop!



Doctor: Young man, is there any medical reason why you should not be inducted into the army?

Draftee: Believe me, Doctor, half of my insides are missing!"

Doctor: What's your internal problem?

Draftee: No guts!

യയയ

Beggar: Believe me, sir, if I don't eat soon, I'll

die."

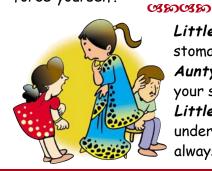
Miser: "How long has it been since you had had anything to eat?"

Beggar: "A week."

Miser (sympathetically): "Sometimes you have to

force yourself."





Little girl: "Aunty, my stomach is paining."

Aunty: "That's because your stomach is empty."

Little girl: "Oh! Now I understand why Uncle always has headache."

Dushtu Dattu







CALLING ECO-TOURISTS

he lodge was beautiful...a little wooden house with a small garden and a wonderful view...just dark green forest stretching for miles. It seemed a perfect example of 'ecotourism'. Our travel agent had promised sightings of animals like neelgai, sambhar, wolves and, if we were lucky, the tiger. Next morning the excitement increased when, as we got on the jeep to enter the sanctuary, the driver mentioned they had just received word that two tigers had been spotted on the eastern side of the sanctuary. However, when we entered the gates, we realized that almost a hundred other people had the same information! We became part of a convoy of twelve jeeps and vans, all heading towards the same point. After a while, the vehicles stopped and the drivers said we would have to wait for our turn to ride the elephants, which would take us closer to the tiger.

We watched the elephant making three trips; soon it was going to be our turn...and then the commotion started. One driver started his jeep first, then another and then all of them had started inching forward. "What's happened?" asked Mom. "Madam, the tigers are crossing the road. If we wait for the elephant, you'll miss seeing them," replied our driver. "I'll take the jeep ahead and we'll try and see them from inside itself."

"Is it safe?" asked Mom immediately, I'm sure, hoping it wouldn't be a repeat of the 'Maneaters of Kumaon' type of thing.

"MOM!" both my brother and myself

yelled together, "I'm sure the guy knows what's safe!" But as we inched forward, I wondered if they actually did know what was safe and what was not. Five minutes later, the vehicle ahead of us had bumped into the van next to it and both the drivers and the passengers were yelling at each other through the windows. There was an awful lot of noise, dust and too many vehicles...through which we just about managed to see the two tigers up ahead.

Was it safe? It was not. In such a situation, the possibilities of danger are many – the tiger could have attacked a vehicle or the elephant could have panicked, and in either case the people would have got hurt. The tiger is not a pet, it is a powerful animal, and incidents of tigers attacking vehicles inside sanctuaries have often been



reported. A national park or sanctuary is not a zoo, where the animals are kept "under control". It is a place where animals live in their natural habitat.

Is this ecotourism? It is definitely not ecologically friendly or ecologically sensitive tourism! 'Ecotourism' is a term which was apparently coined by a marketing agency trying to promote Costa Rica, a country in South America, a rainforest destination. Gradually the word has now started to mean different things to different people.

Unfortunately, studies have shown that all tourism activity has a largely negative impact on regional ecosystems. For most local residents, i.e., villagers in the area, tourism disrupts their lives completely. Developers buy their land, which usually leaves them without work. Since they are unable to farm, they find their water bodies getting polluted and depleted, and they have to watch the profits of tourism going to outsiders. A few do find jobs, but they are usually not given opportunities for better training or to learn new skills. As a simple analogy...would you like it if unknown people were to occupy your house, leaving you with just a small shed outside, use all your things as resources (food, electricity, appliances, toys), invite people for a holiday (in your house!) and then tell you that you should be happy because you can escort the visitors from the gate to the house!

Does this mean that tourism should be stopped? People must travel, experience new things and get to know alternative cultures. However, it is clear that we all have to work towards better planning, regulation and understanding. As citizens we have to teach ourselves to become more sensitive to the needs of the people and the environment where we visit.

In many wildlife sanctuaries we often see tourists openly flouting rules. People play loud music in their cars, they make bonfires at nights, often even throwing garbage and plastic bags out of the windows. We

certainly would not do this at home. Then why do we subject the animals and local residents to such terrible behaviour? We must also try and conserve the local resources of water and power more conscientiously.

In many places we can choose to stay in village homes, often called home stays,

and/or use facilities provided by the locals (boat rides, guided treks, etc.) which give people of the area an opportunity to make a living from tourism. We also need to be far more sensitive to regional traditions and the cultural ethos of the place we visit (don't take photographs of people/tribals without asking for permission; dress appropriately) all of which can do a great deal to make tourists more ecologically sensitive or...ecotourists!

In the coming months we hope to bring you glimpses from different places in the country, like Periyar, Corbett, the Andamans and Sikkim, where you can see how the challenges of tourism have been tackled in ecologically friendly ways. Till then, as a tourist, do remember to:

- Conserve regional resources like water and electricity
 - Care not to litter and throw garbage
- Be careful not to destroy or disturb plants, birds and animals
 - Follow the rules in national parks and sanctuaries
 - Choose home stays and other local activities
 - Be sensitive to cultural traditions

Madhulika Goyal

Kalpavriksh – Environment Action Group



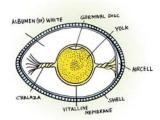


Don't worry,
Gajju! Egg yolk is
rich in vitamins,
minerals and
protein-it's good
for you!

Ugh!
They're
throwing
eggs at
me!

Yolk

The yellow portion of an egg is known as the *yolk*. It is that part of the egg that directly relates to the formation of the embryo. The yolk makes up about 33 per

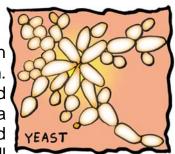


cent of the liquid weight of the egg. It contains all the fat in the egg and a little less than half of the protein. The fertilized egg is a highly complex reproductive cell and is potentially a small centre of new life. The germinal disc from which new life develops is attached to the yolk of the egg. Surrounding and protecting the germ cell and yolk is the white, or albumen, consisting of several layers. The albumen is somewhat elastic, and it is a shock-absorbing, semisolid material with a high water content. The albumen and the yolk of the egg serve as food for the growing embryo during incubation. On opposite sides of the yolk are two twisted, whitish, cordlike objects

known as chalazae. They anchor the yolk and keep it from rising and touching the shell. Nature provides them also to serve as a rotating axis to keep the germ cell on the top side of the yolk and, therefore, next to the heat of the hen's body. The yolk and albumen work together to protect and sustain the life of the growing embryo.

Yeast

Yeast is a microscopic single-cellular organism that breaks its food down into alcohol and carbon dioxide through a process known as fermentation. This makes it an indispensable ingredient in baking, as the gas formed causes dough to expand. It is also used in brewing of alcohol. Yeast is a fungus of the class *Ascomycetes*. It feeds on sugar, the fructose and glucose found in fruit and honey, and maltose from flour. Each yeast cell



secretes several enzymes. While one of these enzymes can break down starches into simpler sugars, another changes sugar into alcohol, carbon dioxide, and free energy. The yeast cells use the energy and some of the sugar for growth processes. Yeast reproduces either asexually by budding or fission, or sexually through spore formation. *Budding* is a process where new cell-buds may be produced by yeast growing in sugary or starchy foods that are warm and moist. The other reproductive method is *spore formation*, a process where two cells unite to form a zygote. The zygote divides to form a four-celled spore case or ascus. When the ascus breaks open, the spores scatter in the air to grow elsewhere as new yeast plants. Man's long history of culturing yeasts has made them useful tools in genetic engineering.









Yak

What animal, massive in size, looks like a walking shag rug, with fur so thick that it can easily live in temperatures as low as minus 40 degrees Celsius? The answer – a yak. A native of northern Tibet and central Asia, the yak was first domesticated in Tibet around 1000 B.C. Docile and powerful, the yak is the most useful of domestic mammals at high elevations and serves as a mount, a beast of burden, and a producer of milk, meat and wool.



Domestic yaks are about the same size as ordinary cattle.

Wild yaks are much larger, and some bulls attain heights of

about 6 ft at the shoulder hump. The hair of the wild yak is black and short, except on the flanks and tail where it forms a long, shaggy fringe. Their dense coats and thick hides serve to protect them from the bitter cold of the high mountain country.

The hair from the long fringes of the flanks is used in making cords and rope. Dried yak dung is the only fuel obtainable on the treeless Tibetan plateaus. Yak wool is made into blankets, tents, and packs. The softer wool of the young animals is made into garments. Yak milk is very rich in fat content. Like other mountain animals, the yak is especially adapted for life in the cold, rarified air. It breathes more slowly than lowland cattle and has more red blood cells which help it absorb oxygen from the thin air. Despite their bulk, yaks are very sure-footed on snow and ice, and can scramble up mountain slopes and along dangerous paths almost as nimbly as goats.

- By Rajee Raman

Activity

Test your knowledge of science by taking a shot at the following questions.

(Hint - the answers all begin with 'Y')

- 1. Tropical disease caused by bacteria-like micro-organisms called *spirochetes*, which attack mainly children.
- 2. Common name of *Taxus baccata* a medium-sized red-berried evergreen tree, whose durable timber is prized for furniture. Its leaves and other parts are poisonous.
- 3. A species of very aggressive wasps who live in colonies that remain active only for one summer (after which the queens fly away and the others die).
- 4. A soft silvery metallic element and a rare earth of the lanthanide series, it is the 70th element and its chemical symbol is Yb.



3. Yellow Jacket, 4. Ytterbium

2. Yew,

1. Yaws, 1. Yaws,



READ AND REACT

A NOVEL CONTEST FOR READERS

Cash prize of Rs. 250 for the best entry

Read the story below:

Krishnakumar met Ramkumar on the way. "I heard there was a theft in your house on three days," he asked Ramkumar. "You mean to say, you didn't hear the thief breaking open the steel almirah?"

"No, they didn't break open the almirah," replied Ramkumar. "They managed to get hold of the key from beneath my pillow."

"And, on all three days, they took it from the same place? Strange!" remarked Krishnakumar.

"No, I didn't keep the key in the same place," Ramkumar started explaining.

"Then, where did you keep it?" Krishnakumar was now very curious.

"Oh! I shifted the key from place to place," said Ramkumar. "But..."

Before you complete the story, you may keep the following points in mind:

- What was Ramkumar's actual explanation?
- How did he fail to catch the thief?
- ♦ What was Krishnakumar's advice to Ramkumar?
 Write your reaction in 100-150 words and send your entry with a suitable heading along with the coupon below in an envelope marked "Read and React".

	CLOSING DATE : August 31, 2004
Name	Date of birthAge
School	Class
Home address	
	PIN code
Parent's signature	Participant's signature

CHANDAMAMA INDIA LIMITED

82 Defence Officers Colony, Ekkatuthangal, Chennai - 600 097.

usk was falling fast. Mulla Nasruddin had been riding the donkey, since morning, through dusty hot plains. An hour's break for a quick lunch and a short nap in the afternoon under the shade of a tree was all that he had, since morning. His back ached. His eyelids drooped. He wished his journey would end soon.

He pressed the flanks of the donkey rather hard with

his thighs and swung the stick before its eyes to set it on a faster pace. "We still have to cover some distance, you wretch! Can't you see that the shadows are lengthening? Soon even the shadows will disappear. It will be dark, all around. And we won't see where the cobbled road ends and where brambles and prickly thorns wait to maul us," he growled.

The donkey moved faster but, after a few steps, it fell back to its sluggish pace. For, the donkey too was tired. Dead tired, if one may add. Its joints creaked. Its muscles groaned. It felt like dropping down on all fours and resting its legs. But Nasruddin kept prodding

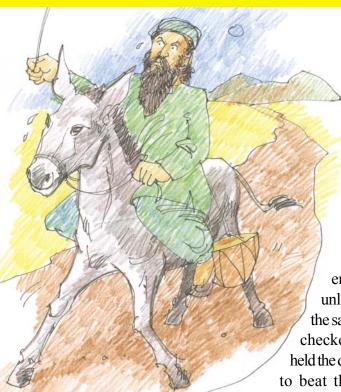
it. The donkey dragged its weary feet. But it would not move any faster.

What could he do to make the donkey move faster? His eyes fell on the rope that rested on the donkey's back. One end of the rope was wound round a big drum. The other end held a half-empty sack of feed for the donkey. Both the drum and the sack rubbed against the ribs of the donkey when it moved. That was a further irritant to the donkey.

'Ah! Why didn't I think of that, earlier! I now know

how to make the donkey not merely gallop, but almost fly,' his face glowed with joy. He hit the drum with the stick. The drumbeat was deafening. The sound scared the donkey. Fear made it run for its life. Then came yet another drum beat, and then yet another. Every time the donkey thought it had put the drumbeat behind, the sound came again. The donkey ran for its life. It dashed through

WHEN THE DRUM BEATS



the streets of the town, eager to get away from the drumbeats. Nasruddin steered the beast, deftly, to the bazaar. The donkey was about to collapse when he guided it close to a food outlet, pulled the reins in and forced the donkey to stop, swung his legs off and dismounted.

The donkey brayed. Did it bray to thank God for getting the heavy weight off its back? God only knows.

Nasruddin tied the donkey to a stake that stood on one side of the entrance to the food outlet, unloosened the rope and placed the sack of grains in front of it. He checked the knot of the rope that held the drum. He was almost tempted to beat the drum once again, but resisted the temptation. He did not want to

frighten the donkey. Not now. He felt sorry for the animal. He knew he had set a faster pace than it liked. That brought a smile to his lips. Should anybody bother about the likes and dislikes of donkeys?

He walked up the steps leading to the eatery. The owner of the shop surveyed him from head to foot. He was dusty all over. Even his beard was dotted with grains of golden sand.

"Been on the road, for long, I presume," the owner observed.

"You said it. I am bone-tired, too. May I have a plate of rice and meatballs and a mug of khawa," Nasruddin brushed the dust off his hand with the end of his flowing robe, while enquiring, "Where is the bathroom?"

"Over there, at the rear of the shop," the man pointed his index finger to guide Nasruddin before repeating to his wife who was serving as cook and waiter et al the food that the client wanted.

Nasruddin was ravishingly hungry when he sat down to dine. The rice was steaming hot. The meatballs were peppered and seasoned to suit his taste. Even the worst of food tastes delicious to the truly hungry. Here, for once, the food was excellent. Nasruddin finished eating, drowned the khawa and belched.

The owner of the shop came from behind the counter to enquire whether he wanted anything else. "Allah be praised! How much have I to pay?" Nasruddin wiped the tips of his mouth with the back of his palm.

"Two Shekels."

"Are you mad?' Nasruddin almost lost his cool. "Is this a wayside eatery or a roadside loot-tery?" he fumed.

"I serve the best of food. And I command very high price for what I serve," the shop owner was firm.

"You don't know whom you had the honour to serve! I am Mulla Nasruddin." He thought he could get away with a discounted price if he gave his name.

"Even if it be the Caliph, I take my price!" The owner noticed that Nasruddin was not listening. His eyes were far away. The owner turned and noticed a donkey kicking its legs up in the air while a couple of boys were standing at some distance, laughing like mad, one boy still holding a stone, aiming it at the donkey's rear. The boys heard the growl of Nasruddin and ran for their lives, still giggling, remembering how the donkey had pranced and bucked when they had hit its flank with a small stone.

"Give me my money and then you can watch your friend," the owner tapped Nasruddin on the back.

Nasruddin gaped at the donkey. The drum was now almost at ground level, though it still remained attached to the donkey by the rope. The drum swung and hit the stake that was wobbling. Its loud notes filled the air. The donkey bucked. It looked as if the stake would come off, if the donkey pulled once again with all its strength.

Nasruddin frowned, scared that the donkey may get free and run away. But the frown vanished, in a second.

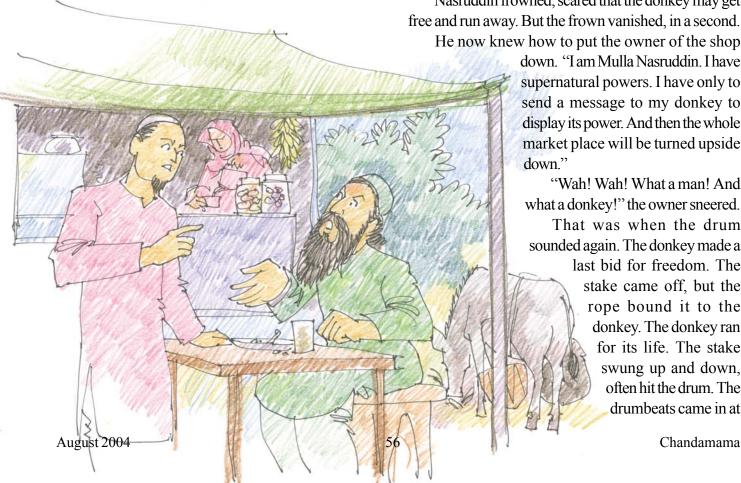
> down. "I am Mulla Nasruddin. I have supernatural powers. I have only to send a message to my donkey to display its power. And then the whole market place will be turned upside

> > "Wah! Wah! What a man! And what a donkey!" the owner sneered.

That was when the drum sounded again. The donkey made a

last bid for freedom. The stake came off, but the rope bound it to the donkey. The donkey ran for its life. The stake swung up and down, often hit the drum. The drumbeats came in at

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regular intervals. The donkey lost its head. It jumped over a pile of pots and pans neatly arranged in front of the eatery. Its legs knocked out a pot. Then the pile of pots and pans came down like a house of cards. The sound of the vessels breaking into bits frightened the donkey further. Eager to get away from the beats of the drum and the rattles of the breaking pots, the donkey raced across the street. It turned a corner and found its path blocked by a marriage procession. It ducked, forced itself through the men who were marching, playing musical instruments, including the drum, bumped into a donkey the bridegroom was riding, sidestepped and ran off, braying, while the bridegroom tumbled and hit the ground.

The women in the entourage screamed. The men reached out for their stout sticks. But the donkey had already vanished into the darkness. The drumbeats, too, soon ceased.

"Whose donkey is it? Find its owner.

He will pay for the damage!" the head of the marriage party, an official of the town, barked at his men. A few of them ran to trace the owner. Finally they found Nasruddin quietly sitting there, with a smile on his face.

"Was that your donkey?" the men asked.

"Yes."

"Why didn't you keep it tied down?"

"I did."

"How then did it get free?"

"It always does that when someone insults its master."

"Ho, ho, ho! You want us to believe that?"

"You will believe me when you learn that I am Mulla Nasruddin. The man with magic powers."

"Mulla Nasruddin? Really?"

"Yes. The owner of this eatery is a roadside dacoit. Read the pricelist. Four times the normal fare in the best of outlets! I told him about it. Then he abused me, insulted me. That enraged my donkey. Call it names. It won't even whimper. It is so tolerant. But insult me, and it turns into a volcano. This man insulted me. My donkey became enraged. It freed itself from the stake, destroyed the pots and pans, charged wildly, its anger now set on the citizens of this town who let this rogue have his

way with such unheard of prices!" Nasruddin fondled his flowing beard while the public turned their fury on the owner of the shop.

Not till he promised to bring down the prices did the commotion end. The people thanked the Mulla for driving sense into the owner of the food outlet.

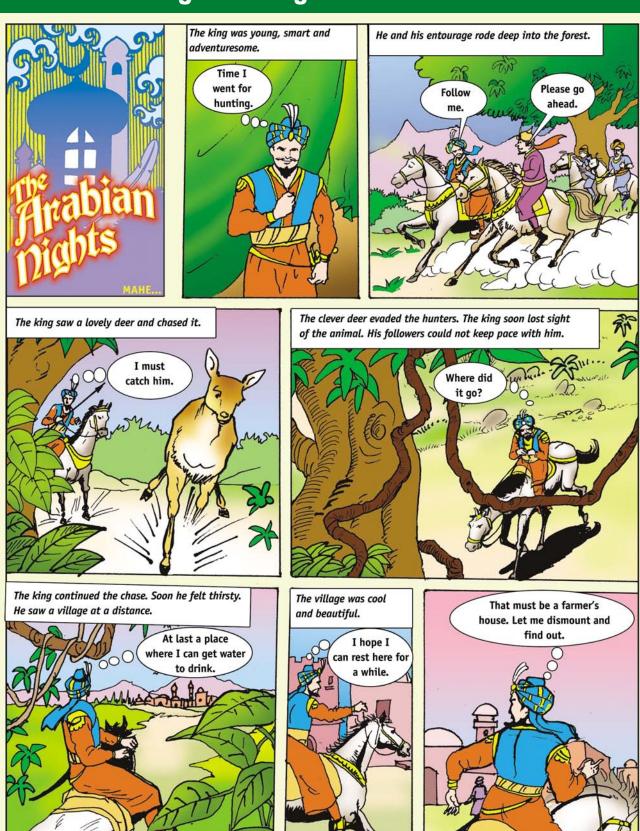
Nasruddin heard the bray of the donkey and the sound of the drum and noticed the beast collapsing at the entrance to the eatery.

"See, it has redeemed my honour and returned on its own!" he grinned at the admiring crowd.

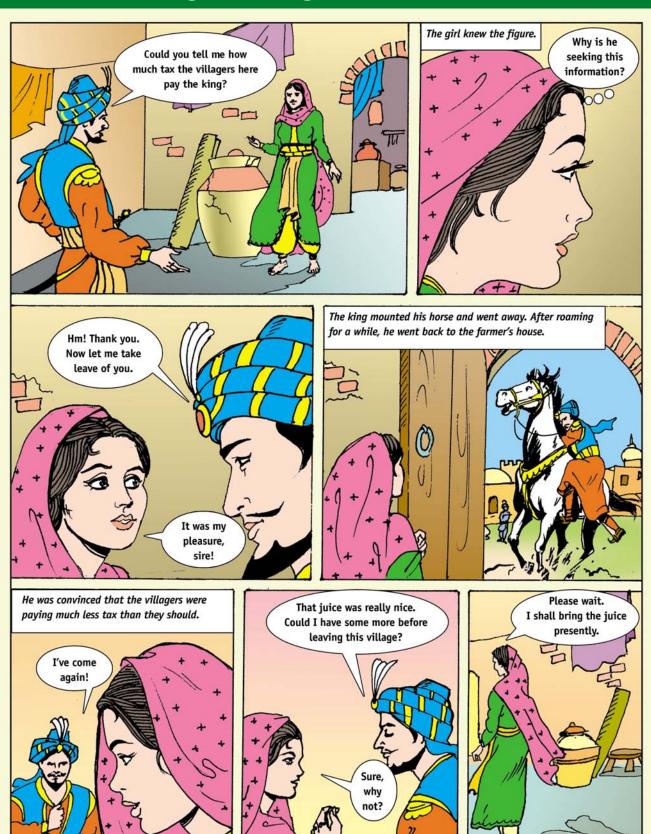
- By R.K.Murthi

During the 80 days of the rainy season, 167,000 cubic feet of water pours every second over the Iguaco Falls on the Brazil-Argentina border. Twice in living memory the lower river had flooded to the top of the falls (a height of 250 ft)!

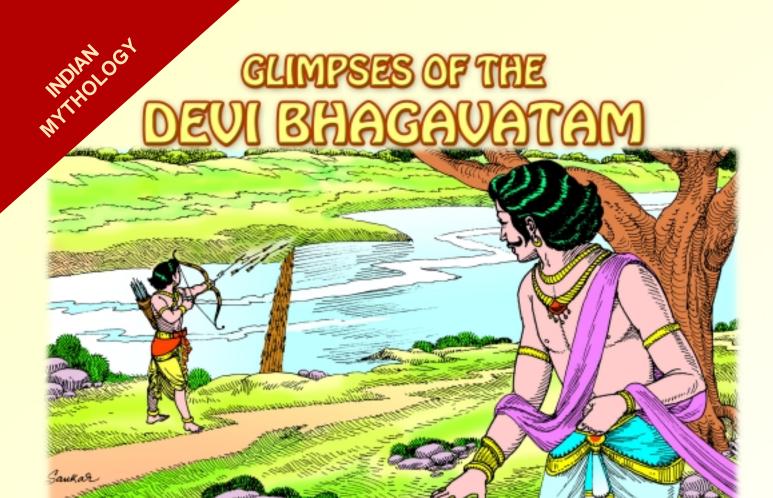
Chandamama 57 August 2004











ing Shatanu, now separated from his wife and son, passed his days in sorrow. He often walked up to the river and remembered the happy days when Ganga lived with him as his wife.

One day, he saw a handsome young lad shooting arrows with great skill, trying to stop the flow. Who could this boy be? the king wondered.

As soon as the boy saw the king, he ran away. The king went after him, but in vain. The boy just vanished.

Shantanu sat down on a rock and continued to look at Ganga. Soon the river changed its form and a woman familiar to the king stood before him.

The king asked her, "Who was that charming lad who ran away from my sight?"

"O King, he's none other than your son—the last of the Vasus—destined to live a long life as a human being. It's time he lived with you," said Ganga with a smile. She then called out for the boy and introduced him to the king. The boy, Gangeya, followed the king. The boy was in due time proclaimed as the crown prince.

Gangeya grew up to be a brilliant youth. His nobility and courage charmed everybody. He was equally quick in learning the various religious rites, literature, and philosophy. What is more, Truthfulness was his greatest virtue.

A few years went by. The king was once alone in a forest. As he sat down under a tree, he saw a beautiful young lady. "Who are you? Why are you in the forest? Who is your father?" asked the king.

"I'm Satyavati, daughter of the chief of this forest—Dasaraj," replied the lady.

"I'm Shantanu, of the dynasty of the Kurus," said the king. The young lady greeted the king.

As they sat chatting, the king said, "A strong desire is overpowering me. Will you marry me?"

Satyavati blushed and said, "O King, my marriage depends on my father's will."

The king requested her to take him to her father.

8. THE PRINCE WHO WAS NOBILITY INCARNATE

Dasaraj, who was a chieftain under the Kurus, was delighted to see the king. "My lord, I consider myself extremely lucky because you chose to visit my hut. Can I do anything for you?"

"I'd like to make your daughter my queen, with your permission," said the king.

"I should be the happiest man if my daugther becomes your queen. But..." Dasaraj faltered.

"What makes you hesitate?" asked the king anxiously.

"My lord, your son born of her must succeed you to the throne," said the chief.

The king's face grew pale. How could he accept such a condition when he had a most brilliant successor in Gangeya? Without another word he walked back to his palace.

However sincerely the king tried to forget Satyavati, he could not. Prince Gangeya noticed the changes in his father's condition.

"What's worrying you, father? Are you anticipating any invasion?" he asked the king politely.

But Shantanu could not speak of his anguish to Gangeya. He parried the question.

But the prince did not leave it at that. From the king's

confidents he soon found out the cause of his sadness.

He walked into the forest and met Dasaraj. "Sir," he said, "I beseech you, let the king marry your noble daughter."

The chieftain said, "I've no objection to my daughter marrying the king. But it's my dream to see my daughter's son becoming king. When he has a worthy son like you, will he agree to my condition?"

"O Sir, I assure you that your daughter's son would succeed my father. Here and now I take this yow: I shall never claim the throne!" said the prince in a solemn voice.

"Noble indeed are you, O Prince, but what about your sons? How can I feel sure that they won't put forth their claim?" asked the forest chief.

The prince's face glowed with determination. He announced, "In the name of Truth, I declare that I shall never marry."

Dasaraj was satisfied. On Gangeya's orders arrangements for the king's wedding with Satyavati were made forthwith.

Gangeya, because of his stern vow, was thereafter called Bhishma—the one unshakable in his path of Truth.

Satyavati gave birth to two sons, Chitrangada and Vichitravirya. Unfortunately, neither of them lived long. Vichitravirya's first son, Dhritarashtra, was blind from birth. Hence Bhishma made his second son, Pandu, ascend the throne.

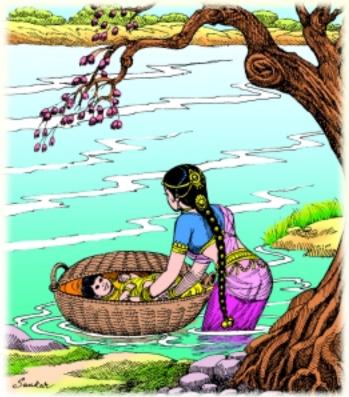
Pandu had two wives, Kunti and Madri. Kunti gave birth to three sons and Madri two. These five princes, Yudhishthira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva, became famous as the Pandavas.

Dhritarastra, too, had two wives. Gandhari gave birth to a hundred sons. Of the second wife was born one son.

Kunti, while a young girl, had beget a child through her worship of Surya—the Sun God. She floated the infant son in the river. He was later rescued by a charioteer. The boy grew up and became famous as Karna.

Pandu, under some circumstances, had to live in the forest along with his two queens and five sons. When he died, Madri sacrificed herself in his funeral pyre. Kunti returned to the palace with the five young Pandava princes.

(To continue)





A Medieval Traveller into Forty-four Countries

ne summer day, nearly seven hundred years ago, a solitary young man on his donkey left his home and family on a long, long journey. He was driven by a strong sense of curiosity and wonder. He had a passion to explore the world and visit sacred places of pilgrimage. Tirelessly he travelled for almost three decades across hot deserts, turbulent rivers and stormy seas. He later joined the caravans of merchants, traders and other travellers for protection and security. He crossed two continents, covering 75,000 miles, three times the distance logged by his predecessor Marco Polo. He visited regions which in today's atlas comprise 44 modern countries, from Spain in the west to India and China in the east, from the Sahara desert to the windswept steppes of Russia.

Who was this great and courageous adventurer? He was none other than Ibn Battuta, born in 1304 in Tangier, Morocco, into a family of legal scholars. He began his famous travels in 1325 and ended them about thirty years later around 1354. He was an extremely interesting man with talents as a scholar, pilgrim, jurist, mystic, courtier, diplomat, sailor, explorer, poet, historian and geographer. In the course of his journeys, he had colourful and varied experiences and even held important positions and pursued promising careers in various kingdoms far and wide.

On his return home from his epic voyage, so impressed was the Sultan of Morocco by his report and stories that he at once hired a young scholar, Ibn Juazi by name, and asked the great Ibn Battuta to dictate to him "an account of the cities which he had seen in his travels and the interesting events which had clung to his memory, and that he should speak of those rulers of countries, of their distinguished men of learning, and of their pious saints". Thus was compiled a whole book of his wanderings known as the *Rehla*, meaning the journey. Indeed, a journey of hardship, adventure and discovery.

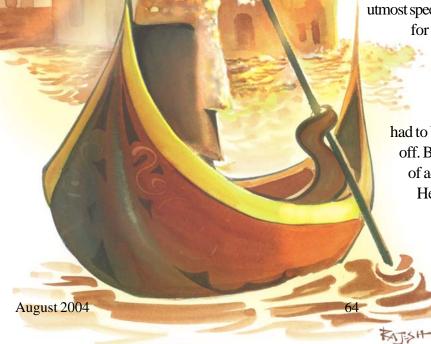
Ibn Battuta and his little party "travelled light with utmost speed, pushing on night and day without stopping"

for they knew that travel was dangerous by land and sea and feared that any moment they might be attacked by bandits and rebels. After months of travel, Ibn Battuta battled with loneliness and disease. So ill was he that he

had to be tied to the saddle to keep him from falling off. But he was brave and full of hope and the spirit of adventure was still burning bright in his heart. He recovered and continued on his voyage.

Soon the group reached the great city of Alexandria in Egypt. He described it later as one of the five most magnificent places he ever visited. He also mentions the famous

Chandamama



Lighthouse, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, but at that time it was already in ruins. It was here that he met a famous mystic and became his guest.

While sleeping one night on the rooftop of his humble dwelling, Ibn Battuta had a dream. "I dreamed that I was on the wing of a great bird which was flying with me towards Mecca, then to Yemen, then flying far eastward and finally landing in a dark and green country, where it left me."

The next morning the young traveller was astonished to find that the holy man already knew about his dream and told him that he would soon meet three fellow mystics in the oriental countries of India and China. "I was amazed at his prediction, and the idea of going to these countries having been cast into my mind, my wanderings never ceased until I had met these three that he had named and conveyed his greetings to them," recollects Ibn Battuta.

Before entering the Indian sub-continent he sent gifts and a letter announcing his arrival to the Sultan of Delhi by foot-post, the postal system of those olden days. The foot-post had three stations every one mile. At each station waited several young and physically fit men. The courier started from the city holding a rod attached with copper bells in one hand and the letter in the other and ran as fast as his legs could carry him. The sound of the bells alerted the next man of the approaching courier and he got ready to take over. The process continued till the letter reached its destination. Where the normal period of travel was fifty days, the foot-post took only five days to cover the distance. It was much faster than the horse-post where royal horses were stationed every four miles.

So Ibn Battuta met Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq in the audience hall of thousand pillars at his palace in Delhi. The Sultan was known to be pious, generous and courageous but eccentric. He was, in fact, enamoured of making gifts and shedding blood. "His gate was never without some poor man being enriched, or some living man executed." To seek employment with this man was dangerous but the rewards could be great!

The young adventurer was prepared to take the risk and was given the post of a judge in the royal court with a handsome salary and he worked for seven years.



Unfortunately his acquaintance with a local holy man who seemed to have offended the Sultan put him in grave danger. He was soon put under house arrest. The mystic was executed but Ibn Battuta was later given freedom. He gave up his worldly possessions and, exchanging his clothes with a beggar, adopted the life of an ascetic and joined a hermit living in a cave.

Five months later the moody Sultan summoned him and knowing his passion for travel appointed him ambassador to the kingdom of China. The wandering scholar who had left his home with a meagre sum of money and a little donkey now led a rich royal retinue of hundred horses, two hundred dancing girls, and ships full of the most expensive gifts. A thousand royal horsemen were under his command. Here was an opportunity to get away from the Sultan and his moods and visit new lands far and wide. The offer was too exciting to refuse.

So the royal ambassador and his retinue marched on towards the sea to board their ships. Alas, once outside Delhi they were ambushed by some rebels. Though outnumbered, they managed to defeat them and continued on their way. But there was again a second attack and Ibn Battuta got separated from his group. The bandits kept him prisoner in a cave overnight, planning his death

in the morning. The clever traveller convinced them to let him go in exchange of his clothes as he had nothing else to offer. A week later he was rescued by a passer-by who found him toddling his way barefoot wearing only a pair of trousers. He was carried to a village and after some days of rest, rejoined his group and was ready to proceed to China.

But before he could board his ship, tragedy struck once again. The sea was swept by a terrible storm and the two vessels carrying all the gifts and his large retinue broke apart and sank. Alone he stood on the sandy beach, penniless and ashamed for being unable to carry out his mission. But he was lucky to be still alive!

Should he return to Sultan Tughluq in Delhi? He dared not for fear of being punished for his failure. So he decided to continue his journey to China on his own and reached the Maldive Islands. There the Queen coming to know of his credentials and experience, appointed him the chief judge and he stayed on for eight years.

Then he visited Ceylon and climbed up the Adam's Peak where there is a depression in the rock resembling a large footprint, considered sacred by various religious faiths.

Once again he set sail in the Indian waters and met with mishaps. One of his vessels was shipwrecked and the other was plundered by pirates before he could reach Sumatra on his way to China. Finally he did land in Cathay on the southeastern coast of China. From there he returned home to Morocco in 1349 to find that one of his parents had died. The following year he made a short trip to Spain and then three years later he went on his last and final great journey by camel caravan through the Sahara desert to Mali in West Africa. It was a journey of about 2,000 miles across the most fearsome wilderness on earth.

Finally he returned to Morocco for good in 1354 where it is learnt he spent his last years serving as a judge. He died in 1368 at the age of 64.

Ibn Battuta was indeed one of the most remarkable adventurers and explorers of all times, though not so widely discussed. But his name has travelled as far as the moon where it seems a crater has been called after him.

- By AKD

REMEMBERING YOUR TEACHER

On the eve of Teachers Day last year, our President, Dr. A.P.J. Adbul Kalam, made a broadcast in which he remembered three of his teachers. Excerpts from his speech will be published in the September issue.

During your school life, one or another teacher must have made some impact on you, and you will always remember him/her even after you leave school.

Would you like to write about your teacher?

Your essay should be between 300 and 500 words in English. Send it before August 10, 2004. The best essay if published will fetch a prize of Rs 1001.

The essay should be your original writing as certified by your parent. Send details, like your full name, date of birth, class, name of school, complete address, and phone number.

OPEN TO CHILDREN BELOW 16

Address your entries to

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OUR ANIMAL FRIENDS

Veena and parents are on a visit to the museum. Seeing the intricately carved figures of a mother and child, she cries out – "Wow, Daddy, look at that statuette? Isn't it lovely?"

"It is," agrees her father. "But can you imagine the cruelty hiding behind the beauty?"

"What do you mean, Daddy?" asks Veena, puzzled.

"You know, Veena, that statue is made of ivory – that is, elephant tusks. Hundreds of elephants worldwide are slaughtered every year for their beautiful tusks. Man's greed has caused a great decline in the elephant population!"

"How terrible!" exclaims Veena.

"Daddy, can't anything be done to protect the poor elephants?"

"Well, the Government of India has banned the sale of ivory products. But still the trade continues on the sly."

Veena's father pauses and continues: "This is not the only instance of man's cruelty to animals. Silkworm pupae weave their cocoon with a strong and lustrous fibre. To obtain this fibre, the pupae are steamed, boiled or baked alive. Besides this, countless moths are crushed to analyse their eggs and ensure that they are disease-free, so that they in turn will provide only the best of yarn. A silk sari is nothing but a graveyard of silkworms.

Website: www.pcra.org

"And that's not all. Rabbits are bred, raised and butchered mercilessly, for their soft fur, which is used for coats, linings, toys, handbags and the like. Snakes, are caught, nailed to a tree, skinned alive and left to die an agonising death – all for the sake of their beautiful skin, which is used for making handbags and other fashion articles.

"You must have heard about the Pashmina shawls. They are now a banned item. They used to be made from wool sheared from a particular kind of sheep in Kashmir. These days the

government keeps a strict vigil at airports to seize animals and birds and animal products from being taken out of the country."

"Daddy, is there anything I can do to stop this cruelty?" asks Veena.

Her father replies, "You can do it by not buying animal products like silk, furs and ivory, and buying only animal-friendly products instead."

"From now on, I'll do just that! Thank you, Daddy, for telling me all this," says Veena, checking her emotions.



PUZZLÉ DAZZLE

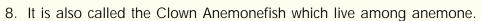
OCEAN TREASURE

Here's a crossword on some sea animals

CLUES:

Across:

- Fish-eating animals that look like undersea flowers and have hundreds of poisonous tentacles.
- Unlike more mobile species, they defend themselves from bird attacks by clamping themselves tightly onto rocks when they are disturbed.
- 4. They are hermaphrodites, nocturnal, found both in sea as well as on land. Its body produces a thick slime. Because of this slime, they can crawl across the edge of a razor and not get hurt.
- 6. Most of these can be found fixed to rocks or other hard surfaces as adults. The larval ones settle on a suitable substrate (usually rocks) and grow adult from there.



10. They are radially symmetrical and have no distinct front and back, only a top and bottom. But they can move in any direction without turning.

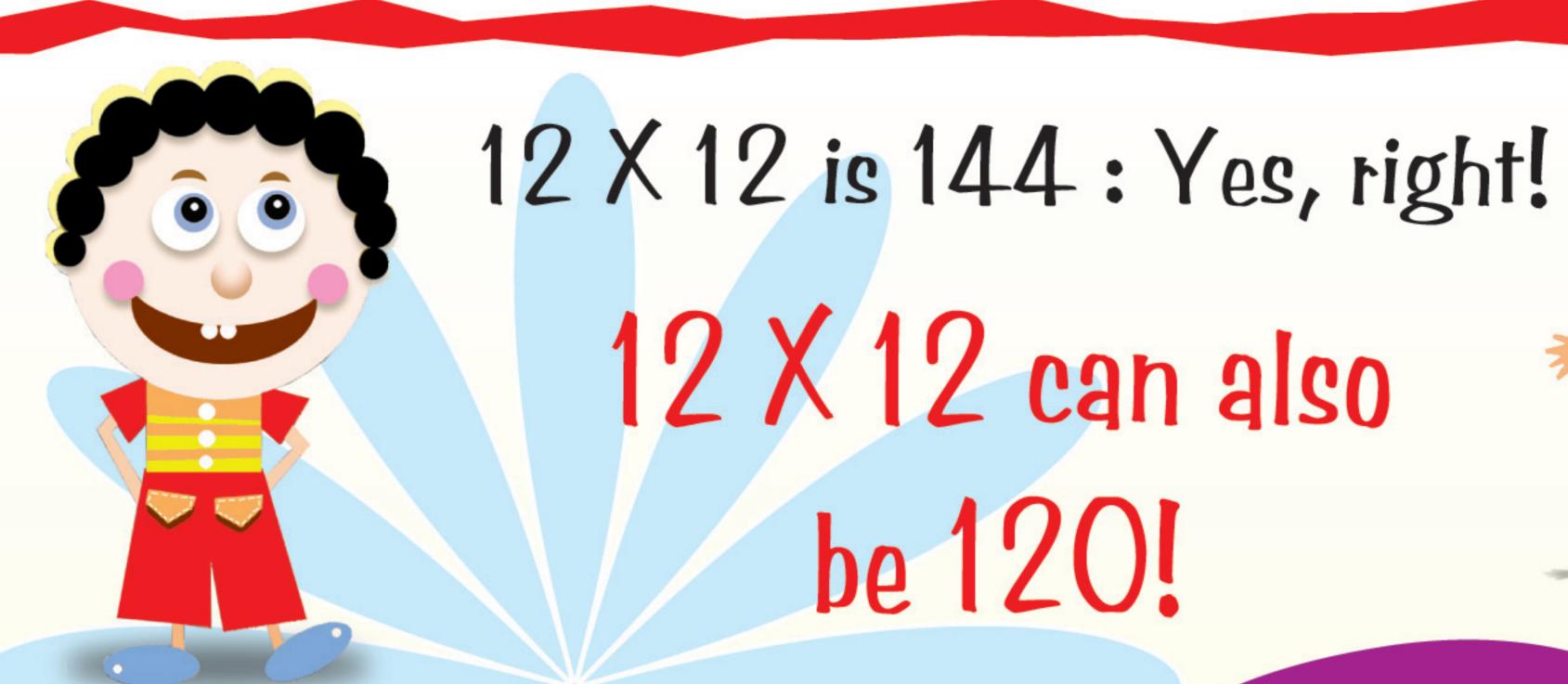
Down:

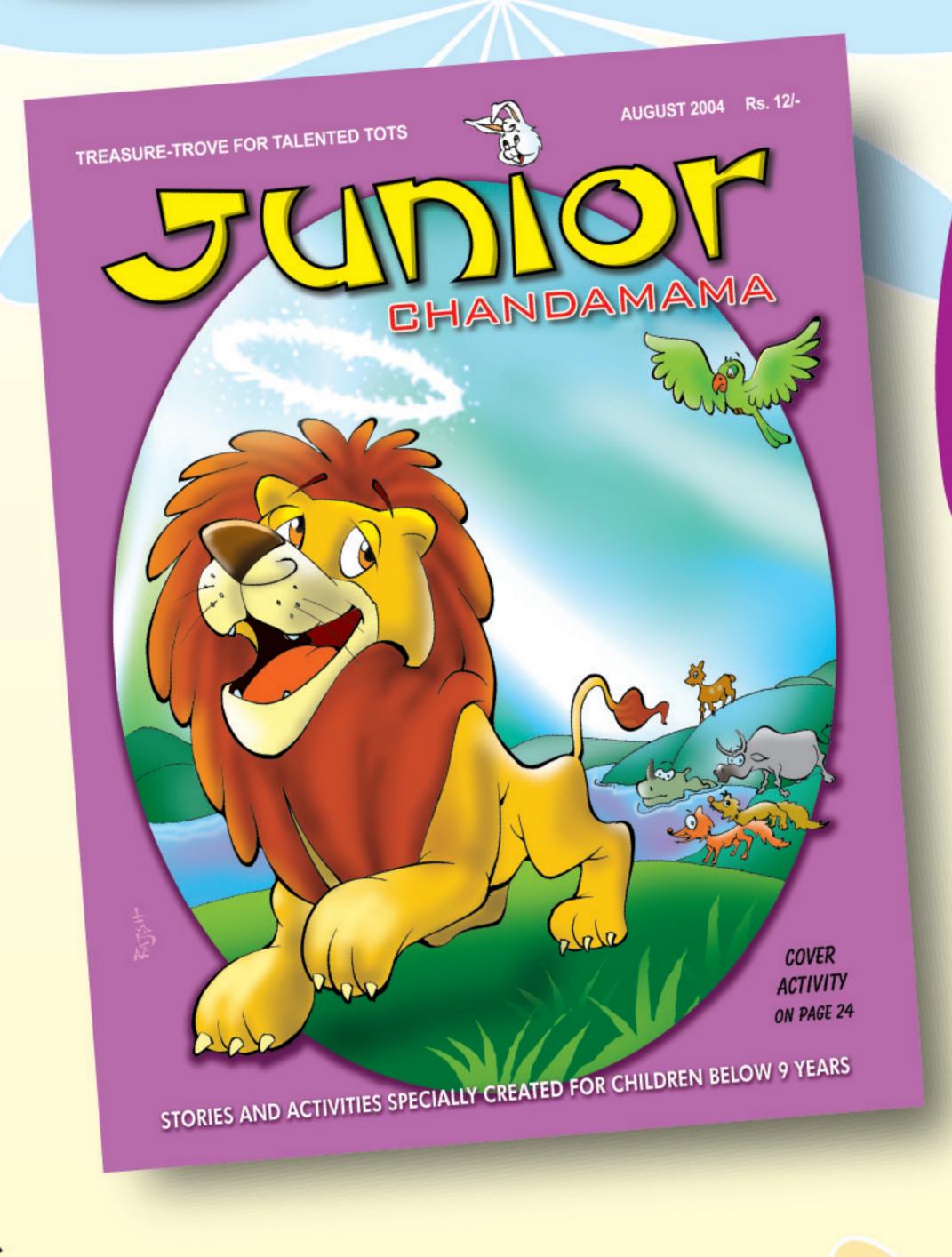
- 1. It is known as the cousin of the sea urchins. It burrows into the sand at low or shallow waters often with just the top edge showing.
- 5. A life threatening disease is compared with this creature.
- 7. Its various plant-like forms offer little clue that it is actually a member of the animal kingdom. The stony one is the active reef builders.
- 9. It has no mouth and eats by filtering water through its body.
- 11. All the species have a hard calcareous shell called test, which is covered with a thin epithelium and is usually armed with spines. They are also found in various colours.
- 12.Their hard, calcium-based shells consist of two halves joined by a hinge. Unique names like "monkeyface," "threehorn wartyback," and "pink heelsplitter" refer to the wide range of shell size, color, shape, and texture found among its shells. By Vaasugi

Across: 2.Anemones, 3.Limpets, 4.Snail, 6.Barnacles, 10.Starfish.

Down:1.Sand dollar, 5.Crabs, 7.Coral, 9.Sponges, 11.Urchins, 12.Mussels.

Answers:







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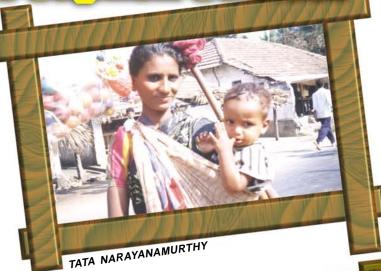
You may write it on a post card marking it:

Photo Caption Contest CHANDAMAMA

and mail it to reach us before the 20th of the current month.

The best entry will receive a Prize of Rs.100 and it will also be published in the issue after the next.

Please write your address legibly and add PIN code.







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CHILDREN'S SPECIAL

(November 2004 issue)

Inviting young writers and artists (ages 6-15) to send original stories and drawings/paintings

TORIES

- Maximum 3 entries
- Entries can be in any language in which Chandamama is printed
- Number of words not to exceed 500 • Give a catchy title • Selected entries will appear in all language editions.

- Maximum 3 entries Minimum size 15 x 10 inches
- The theme of drawing / painting should be from Indian mythology - a short synopsis to accompany the entry • If selected on the basis of their entries, the participants should be ready to travel to Chennai to illustrate stories • Travel expenses will be met.

CLOSING DATE: September 15, 2004

 Attach passport size photo (colour) • Attach separate sheet with details: name, age (date of birth), class, name of school, home address in full with PIN code, phone number, description of entries • Entries to be certified by parent to be original/unaided work of participant • Superscribe on the envelope: Children's Special

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